DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 655 EC 307 677

AUTHOR	Fad, Kathleen McConnell; Moulton, L. Rozelle
TITLE	Teaching Kids & Adults with Autism: Building the Framework for Lifetime Learning.
ISBN	ISBN-1-57035-204-6
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	234p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Sopris West, 4093 Specialty Place, Longmont, CO 80504 ($45). Tel: 303-651-2829; Web site: http://www.sopriswest.com ($45).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adults; *Autism; Behavior Modification; Children; Communication Skills; Cooperation; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; Interpersonal Communication; *Lifelong Learning; *Multisensory Learning; *Skill Development; *Teaching Methods; *Teaching Models

ABSTRACT

This teaching guide combines a multisensory approach to teaching children and adults with autism through a structured teaching model for direct instruction. Part 1, divided into three sections, discusses important links to learning: improving communication with multisensory techniques, using practical behavior management techniques to help students learn, and using a structured teaching model for direct instruction. Part 2 applies the links and explains how to teach six groups of specific skills: skills that prepare students for learning; cooperation skills; learning by imitating and matching; independent learning skills; basic communication skills; and higher-level communication skills. Each chapter has a step-by-step model for teaching the first skill, then continues with tips and guidelines for teaching the other skills in the chapter. The teaching model includes seven steps: stop; look; listen; watch me do it; let me help you; now you show me; and you got it! Part 3 provides information that goes beyond the basics. Chapter 16 focuses on ways to help students generalize their skills, and Chapter 17 asks and answers some common questions and addresses frequently encountered challenges. Appendices include references and recommended resources, reproducible forms, and picture symbols. (CR)

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TEACHING KIDS & ADULTS WITH AUTISM

Building the Framework for Lifetime Learning

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ISBN # 1-57035-204-6

Edited by Raven Moore
Text layout and design by Kimberly Harris
Cover design by Kimberly Harris
Selected book illustrations by Tom Oling
Picture/Symbol Card illustrations by Andrea Hergenreder

Printed in the United States of America

Published and Distributed by:

Sopris West
4093 Specialty Place • Longmont, CO 80504 • (303) 651-2829
www.sopriswest.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank some friends and associates whose comments, guidance, and direct assistance made these materials possible. We would first like to thank Raven Moore, whose editorial work is most helpful in the writing process. Raven's patience and kindness made her a pleasure to work with and know.

We are also grateful to the many children and adults with autism, communication disorders, and developmental disabilities with whom we have worked over the years. We thank their families and teachers for the valuable lessons we have learned from their positive attitudes and caring spirits. We are appreciative, too, of the inspiration and knowledge shared with us by school and district and agency personnel whom we know across the country. A special acknowledgment goes to some excellent teachers in Brownsville, Texas who shared ideas with us for materials: Joe Contreras, Elisa Gallegos, Gloria Guerrero, and Susan Hernandez.

Thanks also to our families and friends in Austin and elsewhere. We're lucky to have such a fine support network. A final thanks to Bandit and Jessie, companions to the end.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kathleen McConnell Fad, Ph.D. is a private consultant to school districts, regional service centers, and community agencies; she has more than 20 years of experience in education. She has been a general education teacher, special education teacher, supervisor, university faculty member, and author of several books and other materials. Kathy's emphasis remains on practical ideas for teachers and parents. Her teacher training focuses on sharing academic and behavioral intervention strategies for challenging students. As a consultant, Kathy works most often with students who have autism and students with behavior disorders. Kathy's most recent publications include an evaluation instrument and intervention manual for students with ADHD as well as a guide for completing behavior assessments and intervention plans.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Who's Right? 1
Who Can Use This Program? 3
What's What and Where Is It? 3

PART I: THE THREE LINKS TO LEARNING

The First Link: Improving Communication With Multisensory Strategies 9

Chapter 1—Finding Communication Strategies That Work 11
Why Communication Isn't Always Effective 11
Choosing the Best Communication Style to Use 13

Chapter 2—Creating Visual Support Systems 15
Creating Visual Systems for Students 15
Components of Visual Systems 17

Chapter 3—Using Visual Systems as Communication Tools 23
Convenient Visual Communication Tools 24
Alternative Formats 28

The Second Link: Using Practical Behavior Management Techniques to Help Students Learn 31

Chapter 4—Identifying the Causes and Intent of Specific Behaviors 33
How the ABC ➛ P Model Works 34
Putting the ABC ➛ P Model to Work for You 36

Chapter 5—Teaching Behaviors That Replace Other Behaviors 39
Out With the Old, In With the New 39
Choosing a Replacement Behavior 40
Teaching Replacement Behaviors in Group Situations 41
Teaching Methods for Replacement Behaviors 43

Chapter 6—Using Consequences Effectively 45
Positive Reinforcement 45
Successive Approximations 48
Punishment 50
Power Struggles 52

The Third Link: Using a Structured Teaching Model for Direct Instruction 53

Chapter 7—The What?, Where?, and When? of Structured Teaching 55
The What?: How to Choose Which Skills to Teach 55
The Where?: Choosing a Teaching Location. 59
The When?: Deciding When to Teach 60

Chapter 8—The How? of Structured Teaching 63
Stop 63
Look 65
Listen 66
Watch Me Do It 68
Let Me Help You 69
Now You Show Me 71
You Got It! You Get It! 72

Chapter 9—Keeping Track: Monitoring and Recording 75
Start at the Beginning. 76
Methods for Observing and Recording 77
Evaluating Your Data 79

PART II: CONNECTING THE LEARNING LINKS TO TEACH SPECIFIC SKILLS

TEACHING THE SKILLS 83

Chapter 10—Skills That Prepare Students for Learning 85
Making Eye Contact 86
Sitting in a Chair 90
Quiet Voice and Hands 91

Chapter 11—Cooperation Skills. 95
Following a Simple Direction 96
Stopping When Told 101
Waiting to Begin 102

Chapter 12—Learning by Imitating and Matching 105
Taking Turns. 106
Imitating Motor Movements 111
Matching Objects 113

Chapter 13—Independent Learning Skills. 117
Working Independently and Following a Schedule 118
Initiating 125
Helping Others 127

Chapter 14—Basic Communication Skills *131*
Eliciting Sounds 132
Communicating "Yes" and "No" 134
Making a Choice 140

Chapter 15—Higher-Level Communication Skills *145*

PART III: BEYOND THE BASICS—WHAT TO DO NEXT

Where Do I Go From Here? **153**

Chapter 16—Helping Students Generalize Their Skills *155*
Fostering Generalization 155
Monitor and Evaluate to Teach Generalization 158

Chapter 17—Help for the "What Ifs" *159*
But Wait a Minute! What if ...? 159

PART IV: APPENDICES

Appendix A: References and Recommended Resources *171*
References 171
Recommended Resources 172

Appendix B: Reproducible Forms *177*

Appendix C: Picture Symbols *285*

Materials Kit *303*

INTRODUCTION

Who's Right?

Teaching individuals with autism, pervasive developmental disorders, communication disorders, sensory impairments, and/or cognitive disabilities can be a challenge for parents and teachers. In recent years, there have been two main approaches to instruction for individuals with these disabilities. One approach suggests teaching specific skills and behaviors to students in a sequential, highly controlled manner. A structured teaching model such as this is firmly rooted in behavioral psychology and it emphasizes behavioral principles. When this structured teaching model is practiced with real students in real schools, it often emphasizes direct teaching of one skill at a time, following each performance of the skill with immediate positive reinforcement, and collecting data on specific trials. The focus in structured teaching is on teaching skills primarily by controlling the consequences that follow the behavior. In many situations and for many students, this approach is effective. However, this approach also has some limitations, including problems with generalizing the skills to other, less structured, settings. In addition, many teachers find it difficult to use an exclusively one-to-one format when they have groups of students or when students are in regular education environments.

Another widely used strategy implemented in many classrooms focuses on facilitating students' learning by communicating with those students in several different modes, not just through spoken language. This multisensory, primarily visual, approach to teaching emphasizes alternative communication strategies such as pictures, symbols, music cues, signals, and objects. These alternative communication tools help students follow a schedule, communicate their preferences, make smooth transitions, and improve their rate of learning, especially on independent tasks. In classrooms in which teachers have been trained in these alternative methods, observers might see many visual calendars (see Chapter 2); work schedules; and symbols or pictures of students, faculty, and family members. There is a body of research that supports this multisensory second approach but this approach, too, has some limitations. Of particular concern is the potential for teachers to structure only independent activities for students, rather than doing direct teaching. This may lead to a repetition of already mastered skills instead of an emphasis on constantly teaching new skills and raising expectations.

As sometimes happens in education, there has been a great deal of discussion among researchers, educators, and parents about which of these two approaches is better. ("My way is better than your way!") In some situations, professionals or family members have become strong advocates for one specific approach and have limited themselves to an either-or choice, using only one program and excluding the other. ("Not only is my way better than your way, but it's my way or the highway.") Fortunately, each side in the educational approach debate has research to support the efficacy of its specific program. During the past several years, professional journals have reported conflicting research and opinions from both camps, sometimes escalating into public debates. (For a complete list of references related to programs and their effectiveness, see Appendix A.)

Where Does This Program Fit With Current Practice?

Teaching Kids & Adults With Autism was developed because of the authors' strong belief that limiting the choice of interventions by setting up an either-or situation is not in the best interest of individual students. Choosing only one educational approach limits one's options and may not meet an individual student's needs. Most people who are parents, teachers, or both recognize that each individual student has unique abilities and limitations. Instructional programs must also be individualized so that they meet student needs in the most effective manner possible while maintaining students' integrity. Parents and teachers of individuals with disabilities must balance what they read in the professional literature with what they know to be effective through their own experience.

This program systematically links together three major components: the better aspects of the two methodologies described previously, and some very helpful and practical behavior management techniques.

Part I of this book reflects these three components or "links":

1. Improving Communication With Multisensory Strategies
2. Using Practical Behavior Management Techniques to Help Students Learn
3. Using a Structured Teaching Model for Direct Instruction

Although any of these three components is strong enough to stand alone, each one also complements the others.

Part II of this book focuses on some specific skills, and discusses how to use the three learning links from Part I to teach these important skills.

Part III goes a bit beyond the basics to discuss helping students to generalize their skills; Part III also offers advice for troubleshooting.

To this blend, we (the authors) have added a seasoning of our own personal experiences in working with students and adults who have autism, serious communication disorders, pervasive developmental disorders, behavioral disorders, and other disabilities. The result is a practical teaching guide for teachers and parents of individuals with these disabilities. Available with the program are forms, materials, and suggestions for other resources, all intended to help teachers and parents design the best possible individualized program for their students or children.

Who Can Use This Program?

The most effective intervention for most students with disabilities is a good education. We also believe that parents are their child's *best* teachers. This book was written with both parents and teachers in mind. Although many teachers have years of training and experience, unfortunately many do not, and these teachers may find themselves teaching challenging students without the benefit of expertise or support. Most parents, unfortunately, learn on the job and often have little preparation and few practical resources available to them. We hope that this book will be a useful tool for parents and teachers alike.

This book is appropriate for use with all ages of students, including adults with disabilities. For simplicity's sake we use the terms "students" and "teacher" throughout, but all of the examples and strategies can be pertinent and useful whether you are a teacher, parent or other caregiver, or other service provider.

The book and materials were designed for use with students of any age who share characteristics that make communication and learning difficult. Regardless of whether the student has a diagnosis of autism, behavioral disorders, communication disorders, or developmental disabilities, many of the strategies and materials can be effective. People who have difficulties with social interactions, communication, and behavior rarely manifest these difficulties to the same degree or in the same manner. However, as this book is a practitioner's resource, it does not focus on differences among disabilities but rather on practical strategies for effective instruction. The system is an integrated approach and although not everything will work with everyone, many of the ideas will be helpful to teachers, families, and caregivers of people with disabilities.

What's What and Where Is It?

There are 17 chapters in this book, organized in this manner:

Part I discusses the three important links to learning and is divided into three sections:

- The First Link: Improving Communication with Multisensory Techniques (Chapters 1-3)
- The Second Link: Using Practical Behavior Management Techniques to Help Students Learn (Chapters 4-6)
- The Third Link: Using a Structured Teaching Model for Direct Instruction (Chapters 7-9)

Part II applies the three links discussed previously and explains how to teach six groups of specific skills:

- Skills that Prepare Students for Learning (Chapter 10)
- Cooperation Skills (Chapter 11)
- Learning by Imitating and Matching (Chapter 12)
- Independent Learning Skills (Chapter 13)
- Basic Communication Skills (Chapter 14)
- Higher-Level Communication Skills (Chapter 15)

The skills in each group were selected because they are some of the most basic ones (and sometimes among the most difficult ones to teach). Each chapter has a step-by-step model for teaching the first skill, then continues with tips and guidelines for teaching the other skills in the chapter. The teaching model is easy to follow and implement; it includes seven basic steps:

- Stop
- Look
- Listen
- Watch Me Do It
- Let Me Help You
- Now You Show Me
- You Got It! You Get It!

Part III provides information that goes beyond the basics. Chapter 16 focuses on ways to help students generalize their skills, and Chapter 17 asks and answers some common questions and addresses frequently encountered challenges.

Throughout this book, you will see the consistent use of icons and symbols. Many supplementary materials that are mentioned in this book are available in Appendix B as reproducible forms, or in the Materials Kit. The symbol **Forms** indicates that there is a corresponding ready-to-use form available in Appendix B. The symbol **Kit** indicates that the referenced item is available in the Materials Kit.

Although it is not necessary that you purchase these related materials, they are available for your convenience and they will greatly enhance the effectiveness of the program. Teachers and parents today are very busy, and often may not have the time or energy to create their own materials.

THE FIRST LINK: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH MULTISENSORY STRATEGIES

When a student has trouble communicating effectively, several situations may arise:

- The student will probably have a difficult time learning, especially if you teach in only traditional, conventional ways. Learning may be difficult, even for very bright students, when teaching styles and learning styles do not match.
- Accurate information may be difficult to obtain, especially about what each student has already learned.
- It will likely be a challenge to figure out how much potential the student has for learning more. You may hold expectations for him or her that are too low or too high.
- Everyone involved may end up frustrated and angry. (Been there, done that?)
- This frustration and the student's communication difficulties may result in behavior problems at home or at school. When this happens, teachers or parents may start to assume the student is manipulative, purposefully noncompliant, or intentionally disruptive.
- If a negative situation persists long enough, the student may lose self-confidence and the teacher may become so exhausted as to give up.

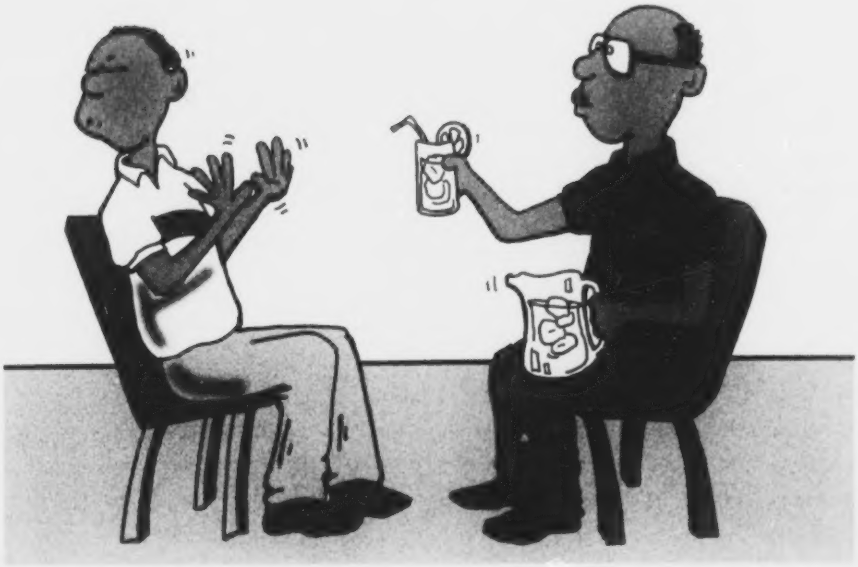
Communication is the exchange of information and ideas. In order for communication to be effective, it must involve an interactive process. Effective communication involves a clear and meaningful message that is sent by one person and then is correctly decoded and understood by the other. If the process breaks down anywhere, the information will not make sense or will be inaccurate.

Using a common language improves communication. Language is a system used by a group of people that gives consistent meaning to sounds, words, gestures, and other symbols. When people do not use the same language, communication is less effective. There are many forms of language that are used to communicate, including:

- Speech
- Writing
- Computer language
- Music

- Nonverbal gestures
- Sign language
- Dance
- Paintings and other artwork
- Symbols
- Pictures

This section will describe how to choose the most effective communication styles; how to create and structure a visual communication system; and how to use visual systems to facilitate communication.



CHAPTER 1

FINDING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Why Communication Isn't Always Effective

Modern society's most commonly used system of communication is spoken language. In American culture and many others, when teachers and parents teach, they most often use speech. For many students, this approach is effective and efficient because the students' style of learning matches this style of teaching. In this situation, learning is easy and automatic and students are able to reach their full potential when challenged and stimulated.

On the other hand, not all students communicate best through speech. Their primary mode of communication may be gesturing, signing, gazing, making sounds, or another form of behavior. When the teaching mode is primarily spoken language but the student's communication mode is not, there is a mismatch of communication styles and the student can have difficulty learning. This mismatch can accentuate or exacerbate the effects of other disabilities or learning problems and may even lead to new behavior problems. (And don't we all have enough problems without causing new ones?)

So What Can You Do?

Even if you prefer speech and your student does not, all is not lost. There are many ways to communicate and you can learn to become an effective communicator in other modes, just as you can learn to speak a foreign language or use a computer. The ultimate goal is to teach students to use many different communication styles, including spoken language, effectively. Just as mastering several foreign languages allows an individual to communicate more effectively with a variety of people, mastering several different communication styles enables your students to interact successfully with people in a variety of environments.

It is difficult not to use your most natural or comfortable mode of communicating all the time. However, while you are teaching new skills your students may learn more if you consistently use their preferred communication styles for instruction, not yours. Put yourself in your students' place and imagine how difficult it must be not to be understood.

Other Styles of Communication to Teach or Use

There are several different modes of communication that individuals may prefer. For example, if you want a student to stop what he or she is doing, you could say "Stop" clearly and directly. (In fact, this is what people usually do, whether the student understands or not.) However, if your student doesn't respond to spoken words or seems not to understand what you're saying, you could combine the verbal instruction with multisensory cues. For example, you could use a variety of pictures, symbols, or other visual cues. Some examples of how to communicate "stop" using visual cues:

- A stop sign **Forms & Kit**
- A red card **Kit**
- A photograph of the student stopping
- A universal symbol for "stop" or "no" **Forms & Kit**
- A symbol or picture that you have created and that the student recognizes (e.g., a fighting turtle motioning someone to stop)

You can also use gestures or other nonverbal cues to communicate "stop," such as:

- A facial expression and body language that means "stop"
- The American Sign Language sign for "stop"
- A hand gesture that means stop
- Shaking your head "no"
- Moving close, making eye contact, and directing a meaningful look at the student (think about your parent's look that meant "stop")
- A light touch on the arm or shoulder

You can also play music or make sounds to communicate "stop," such as:

- Clapping in a certain rhythm
- Playing a sound or music that indicates a time to stop (e.g., a buzzer, bell, or repeated tones; a sound effects tape)
- Chanting a phrase (e.g., "Tick tock, time to stop")
- Whistling a special rhythm or melody, or using the type of whistle that a PE teacher or sports coach uses **Kit**

- Playing a tape of a television game show tune (be sure to check on any copyright permissions that you may need in order to do this)
- Rapping a particular phrase

When the student is in general education settings, have an extra set of materials available so that all the teachers and assistants who work with the student can use the same approach and strategies. Also, don't forget to have a set of materials for the family to use at home. Other students besides the target student can also benefit from these multisensory strategies and may also want to share these "cool" ideas. When you find something that works, use it!

Choosing the Best Communication Style to Use

Consider the following example:

> *If you are trying to prepare the latest popular dish in Texas, armadillo stew with mango chipotle sauce, you could read a cookbook recipe; call your aunt in El Paso and ask her to tell you what to do; sit in your living room and watch a television cooking show that features Chef Bubba cooking the stew; follow along in your own kitchen as you watch a demonstration; take a cooking class at a cooking school; or buy the dish frozen from a mail order company in Toledo and call it your own. The choice you make will depend on:*
>
> - *The person or people for whom you're cooking the dish*
> - *How much experience you have in cooking*
> - *How difficult the dish is to prepare*
> - *How much time you have*
> - *How good or bad your cooking usually is*
> - *Whether you enjoy cooking*
> - *How tired or stressed you currently are*
>
> *For Sunday dinner when your boss and her husband are coming over and you have all day to cook, you might watch Chef Bubba's show and follow along with him. But if your in-laws are coming on Friday night after you have had to work all day, you may thaw the frozen package from Toledo, put it in your best casserole dish, spritz water on your forehead to make it look as if you're working hard, and pop the dish into the microwave.*

Likewise, your student's preferred *communication style and method of obtaining* information will vary. The variables that will impact a student's mode of communication include:

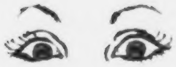
- With whom the student is working
- Whether the student has done this task before
- Whether the task is easy or difficult for this student
- How much time the student has to finish what you ask him or her to do
- How much experience the student has with what's being asked
- Whether the student likes what he or she is doing
- How tired or stressed the student is

Because there are so many variables, it may be best to use an approach that combines several strategies, especially at first. For example, to communicate "stop" to a student, you could use two techniques together: holding up a red stop sign first, then using a hand gesture that means "stop." Remember, the cue that you use for a particular direction should be used consistently for that direction. For example, if you use a certain song to indicate that it's time to work, use the same song each time you want the student to begin to work. However, keep in mind that you may decide to use a completely different communication mode to give another direction. For example, you could use a song to signal work time but use a printed sign to mean "sit."

Remember, though, that matching communication styles with the student is only the first step in effective teaching. The next important step is the teaching process itself. Regardless of which communication style you use, the purpose is to teach effectively. So what's the best way to teach individual skills? There is a body of research (see the References section in Appendix A) that supports using a structured, consistent teaching approach. This book integrates this highly structured teaching approach with multisensory strategies and a few tips learned through our own experiences. Of all the multisensory supports that can be combined with a structured teaching approach, visual support systems are among the most practical and useful tools with students who lack consistent and effective verbal communication skills. The following chapter will present ways to create and use some basic visual strategies and tools.

CHAPTER 2

CREATING VISUAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS



When organizing a classroom, home, or work environment, it is important to provide as much meaningful information to students as possible, as efficiently as possible. When students have difficulty communicating, providing meaningful information to them in an easy-to-understand format makes their learning easier. Using a clear, concrete visual system of communication helps minimize misunderstandings and frustration. We call these visual communication strategies *visual support systems* because they use primarily visual modes of communication to support and assist students as they learn. Visual systems also have several other benefits. They may:

- Facilitate instruction by improving communication (i.e., if you are communicating effectively, then you can actually teach, instead of just spending time trying to communicate)
- Structure and organize the environment, preventing frustration and confusion
- Provide clear, concrete examples of concepts
- Increase reciprocal communication, since students can use them both to express and to receive information
- Help establish routines and make transitions easier

Creating Visual Systems for Students

Take a step-by-step approach to creating an individualized visual system for each student. Here is a logical sequence to help you get started:

1. Identify the people, places, objects, and activities in each of the student's different environments (home, school, work, play, etc.).
2. Select the most meaningful and important people and things in each of these categories. Select people and objects that are meaningful to both the student and the adults who interact with him or

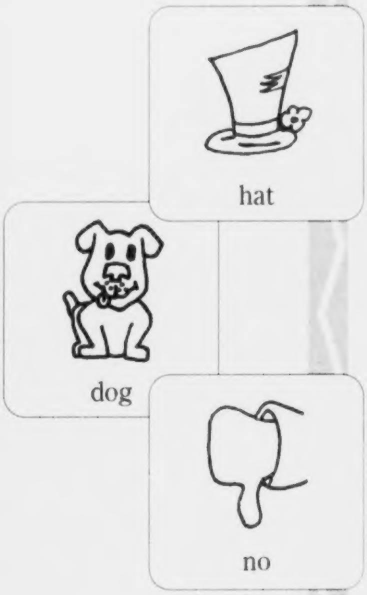
her. Consider each individual student and his or her needs when making your selections. For example, one student may need to communicate about toileting, eating, and other basic needs; and another student's needs might include a daily work or class schedule. There is no exact number of items to select, but keep in mind that the visual system should be an ever-growing collection, so it is okay to start small and keeping adding to it.

Creating a Visual System

1. Identify important people, places, and things in the student's environment.
2. Select those that are most meaningful to the student and the adults.
3. Choose a format.
4. Produce a uniform set of symbol or picture cards.

---

3. Select the format that you think will be most effective: photographs, symbols, drawings, words, or a combination of those formats. The most basic of these formats is photographs; symbols or drawings are a bit more advanced; and words are the most advanced. If you have a student who can read and who responds to written words, then use this format, not pictures or symbols. However, if a student is nonverbal, begin with the most concrete mode—either actual objects or photographs. The photographs can include pictures you take yourself as well as magazine, catalog, or newspaper photos (be sure to check and see whether you need to obtain permission in order to use these photos for a particular purpose). Symbols can be purchased (refer to the Recommended Resources in Appendix A), and some simple designs are also available in the Materials Kit. **Kit**
4. After deciding on the format, produce a set of picture or symbol cards, all of the same approximate size. Next, laminate these cards and then attach a piece of hook-and-loop tape to the back of each card so that they can be attached to calendars or schedules you create (see the section on schedules). (Hook-and-loop fastener pieces are available in the Materials Kit to help get you started.) **Kit**



When the student is in general education settings, include photos, symbols, and pictures from classrooms, the cafeteria, the bus, the playground, lockers, the hallways, etc. for communication systems. Make sure that your pictures show people from these situations as well as showing the physical environment itself. Tasks and activities portrayed should also reflect typical general education routines.

Components of Visual Systems

Schedules

The first essential visual tool in the system is a schedule. Schedules are critical because they help create a structured and predictable environment. This predictability may help some students feel secure and safe, as they can know exactly what is happening when. A structured, predictable environment can also impact behavior in a positive way: When students know exactly what is going to happen next, transitions and "down time" are less problematic. Visual schedules also help to redirect students back to the task at hand without a confrontation or battle. In addition, using a schedule removes the personal element of redirection, as it is not the teacher who is telling the student what to do; it is the schedule. In fact, once a routine is established, students should learn to check and follow their schedules independently. When they can do this, they may begin to accept changes more easily. Although this book focuses on creating schedules for individual students, you could construct and use group schedules as well.

Visual schedules are more than just organizers or prompts. Visual schedules are also wonderful teaching tools in an integrated approach to teaching decision making, self-management, self-control, flexibility, and tolerance for change. Teachers can use schedules to teach students how to manage and control their own behavior. By encouraging students to look ahead at their schedules, teachers provide opportunities for students to anticipate, plan, and prepare for events in their lives. Instead of just pointing to a schedule throughout the day, adults should actively involve students in preparing a schedule, following it, and acknowledging the completion of activities. Schedules are also great tools for teaching skills like communicating "yes" or "no" and expressing a preference (these are discussed further in Chapter 3.)

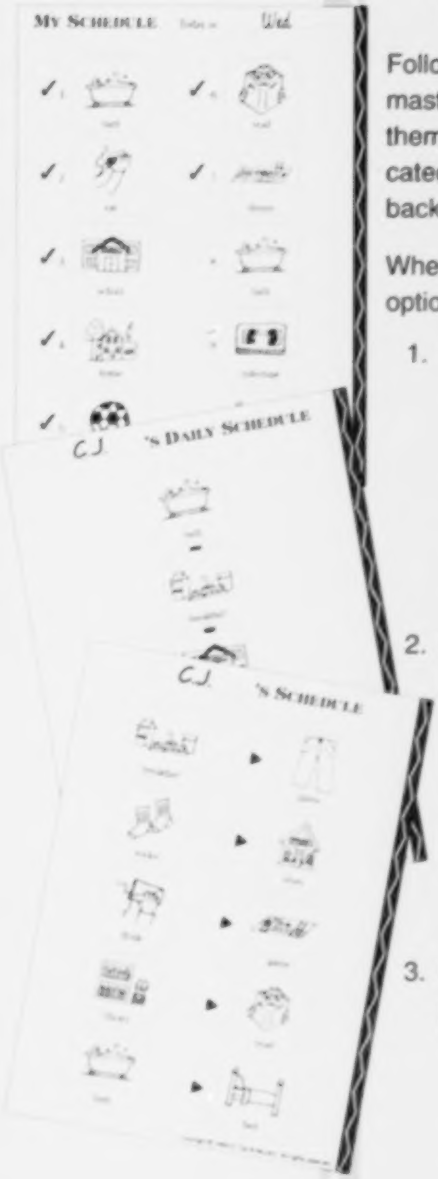
Schedules can include this basic information:

- Routine events and activities
- Unusual or special events
- People who work with the student
- Transition and break times
- Work periods, which can be color coded by subject or topic
- Positive reinforcement times

A personalized individual schedule should include the following basic information:

- Routine events and activities **in the sequence in which they normally occur during the time period**
- Any unusual or special events and activities happening on a given day (e.g., a field day or a guest speaker)
- People who work with the student, perhaps only on a particular day (e.g., a speech therapist who comes on Mondays)
- Transition and break times (bathroom trips, snack times, class changes, lunch, etc.)

- Work periods, including academic work; vocational work; time spent at art, music, home, and computer centers; etc. (A following section will briefly discuss how to create separate work schedules)
- Positive reinforcement times, often represented by photographs (e.g., a picture of a VCR for movie time)



Following are some sample schedules to give you ideas; blank schedule masters are included in Appendix B. to use these masters, photocopy them onto heavy paper and attach hook-and-loop pieces where indicated. Then attach picture or symbol cards with hook-and-loop backing to create a schedule.

Forms

When designing an individualized visual schedule, consider the following options:

1. **Time** can be shown by:
    - Showing a clock face
    - Writing the time on the schedule in digital format
    - Using morning, afternoon, or evening intervals
    - Dividing the schedule by major events (school, home)
    - Indicating days of the week
    - Combining one or more of the preceding ideas
2. The **format** (i.e., what the schedule looks like) can vary, and can include:
    - Vertical lists
    - Horizontal lists
    - Flip charts or booklets
    - Large poster-size charts hung on walls or on bulletin boards
    - Schedules in manila folders
    - Schedules taped to a desktop
3. For the **construction** (i.e., materials and design) of the schedule, you might try:
    - Picture or symbol cards attached by hook-and-loop fasteners to a background with matching squares
    - A pocket system that holds cards
    - Individual cards that are lined up on a desk or table
    - Three-ring binders with removable pages that are hole-punched
    - Small photo albums with inserts
    - Magnetic strips with words, pictures, or symbols
    - Hanging chart card holders with slots for pictures or small cards
4. **Sizes** of schedules can also vary; consider these variables when determining size:
    - Seating arrangement of the work space

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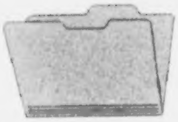
- Number of students in an area
- Visual acuity of the student
- Other information on the wall or chalkboard that may be distracting
- Portability and convenience for students who move from one class or work site to another
- Appearance, especially for students who participate in mainstream and community activities
- Age appropriateness

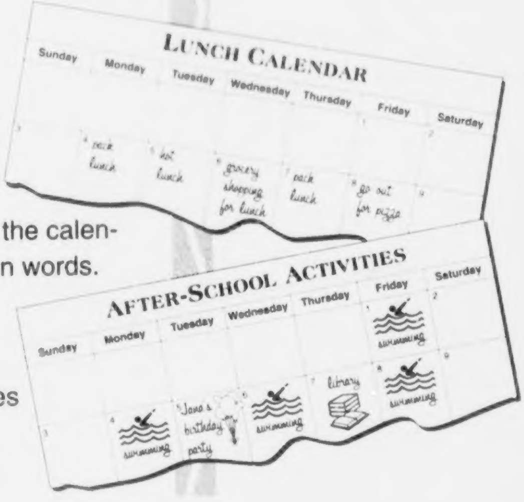
When the student is in general education settings, use schedule formats that do not draw undue attention to the student and that are age appropriate. File folders are excellent because they meet both of these criteria. No one in a school or workplace looks out of place carrying a manila folder, and when the folder is closed the contents are kept confidential.



Students and teachers can use any of these methods for following the schedule:

- Removing the appropriate photo or symbol card after an activity has been completed
- Checking or crossing off completed work
- Turning the appropriate card or photo face down or facing the wall
- Tracking the schedule visually, without changing the schedule components
- Moving pictures or symbols from one part of the schedule to a specific work area, then returning it to its former location when the activity is completed
- Putting photos or symbols into a box or file labeled “finished” or “completed”

When designing visual schedules, consider the full range of options, including calendars. Adults are very familiar with calendars and many of us adults use calendars routinely to help us stay organized and plan ahead. Once students are familiar with visual schedules, introducing the concept of weekly, monthly, or yearly calendars should be easy. Again, the calendars can include photographs, picture symbols, and/or written words. Calendars also have the advantages of being socially acceptable, age appropriate, and concrete.


LUNCH CALENDAR
Sunday
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
1
2
3
4 pack lunch
5 hot lunch
6 grocery shopping for lunch
7 pack lunch
8 go out for pizza
9
AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
Sunday
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
1 swimming
2
3
4 swimming
5 Jane's birthday party
6 swimming
7 library
8 swimming
9

Do not limit yourself to traditional schedules. Visual schedules can be used to teach many step-by-step concepts. For example, there are visual cookbooks with picture or symbol cards representing each step in a recipe sequence. If commercial products are not available for your particular purpose, consider creating your own visual book. You can also use a set of visual cues (photographs, symbol cards) to represent the sequence of steps for almost any everyday task, such as doing laundry, using a VCR, washing dishes, feeding the dog, planting flowers, putting on a tie, and setting the table. The visual sequences can also double as checklists so that students can monitor their progress and check items off as they complete each step. Don't be afraid to design visual cues for many different daily activities—the sky is the limit!

Menus and Choice Boards

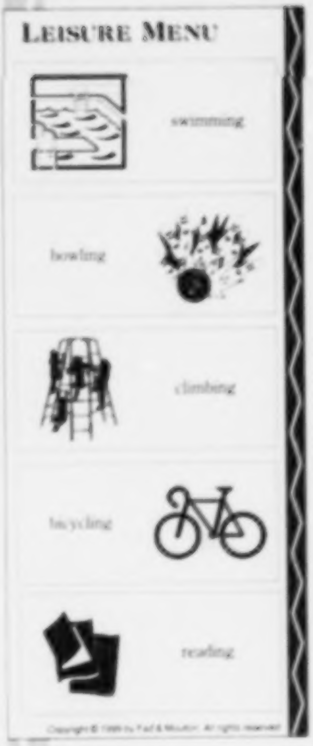
Once you and your students are comfortable with schedules, begin to introduce visual menus. A menu is a visual representation of available choices. The types of items that you can include in visual menus are limitless. For example, you can create a menu of positive reinforcers, activities, food items, entertainment selections, people to spend time with, restaurant choices, or chores. Menus are popular with students because menus allow students to gain some control and to select their own preferences. Menus are also fun for students because menus help prevent boredom or satiation with one particular item.

Menus or choices boards are useful because they:

- Expand a student's repertoire of activities or items by providing new and different choices
- Are an effective way to introduce change and unfamiliar activities, thereby broadening a student's horizons
- Help to decrease repetitive, stereotypical choice making by controlling available choices (e.g., eliminating the choices that a student has selected ad nauseum)
- Can be an effective (albeit sneaky) way to let the student know that a preferred choice is not available
- Provide practice for a student who is learning to make choices
- Encourage teachers to be creative and to vary the selections made available to students

Constructing a menu or choice board is very simple. Just as with schedules, menus can vary in format, size, and method of use. You can vary the number of choices given to different students (e.g., fewer choices for younger students). Menus can also include photographs, or symbols combined with words. The name of the category (e.g., Reinforcers) can be written and/or represented visually at the top of the menu, then individual selections (e.g., clapping erasers, watering plants, crushing cans) can be presented below the title, with labels if needed. Many teachers find it helpful to use both individual menus and group menus for their students, depending on the makeup of their class.

Kit



Visual communication systems not only help organize a student's environment; they also improve communication between the student and others. When visual schedules and menus are convenient, portable, and easily understood by students, they can be communication tools rather than just organizational aids. Students spend time in many different environments: home, school, work, neighborhood, social groups, churches, and recreational organizations to name a few. With effective communication skills, they can more effectively convey ideas and experiences from one environment to another. This sharing of information brings people together and provides them with insights about what is happening and why.

Your visual communication system can incorporate many of the elements previously discussed, if you wish. For example, you could create a laminated fold-out piece that contains a daily schedule on one flap, a weekly schedule on another flap, and a reinforcer menu on another flap.

> When the student is in general education settings, be flexible in your choice of communication tools. Consider sticky notes, spiral notebooks, flip books, and computer generated notes as well as more traditional formats. Whatever works!

The following chapter will discuss ways that the visual tools described here can be used to facilitate communication.

CHAPTER 3

USING VISUAL SYSTEMS AS COMMUNICATION TOOLS

In order for communication to be effective, a person must have skills in both expressive language (meaningfully expressing our ideas to others) and receptive language (understanding the ideas that others communicate to us). For parents and teachers of students with limited communication skills, the ultimate goal is for these students to use language (most often spoken language) in a meaningful way. Consequently, adults usually focus most of their attention and energy on cultivating the expressive aspect of language in students. However, many students also lack broad competencies in receptive language, and although receptive language might not **seem** as important, failing to understand what others are communicating can make students seem uncooperative, noncompliant, or defiant. Poor receptive language skills can also hinder students' learning; if they do not understand what it is you are talking about, they are unlikely to learn from what you say. Fortunately, there are many strategies for improving students' receptive and expressive language skills. Alternative communication systems, especially visual systems, can help. This chapter will describe some specific tools and formats that should help students understand what is happening in their world while also improving communication between home and school.

Visual systems provide a common language and can remove barriers to communication. The previous chapter presented many ideas for creating visual tools such as schedules and menus. One desirable goal is for students to use their schedules or menus spontaneously, without any adult direction. For example, if students can share their visual systems from school with their parents and their home systems with teachers, they have an opportunity to communicate independently. When visual menus enable students to indicate preferences without becoming frustrated, behavior sometimes improves as well. Consider these two examples:

> *Harold is upset at home because his dad is sick. When he gets to school, he gets out his I Feel folder and selects the symbol for "I feel scared" to communicate his anxiety to his teacher, Mr. Bear. Mr. Bear now knows to anticipate some hand biting and rocking, as these are Harold's typical*

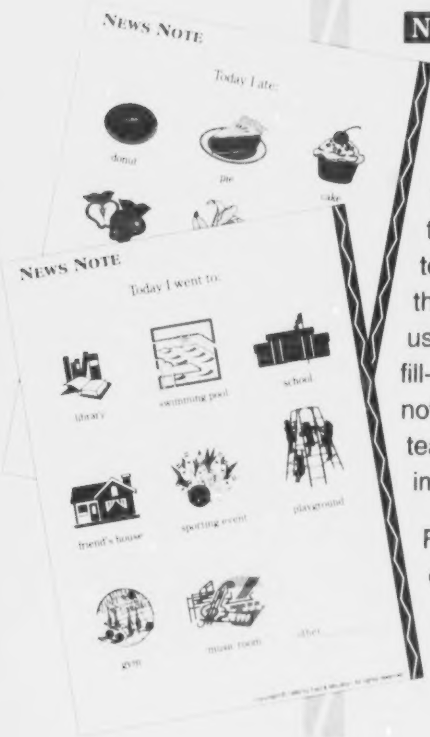
behaviors when he is afraid or anxious. To find out why Harold is scared, Mr. Bear checks the small communication book that goes back and forth from home and school each day. In it, Mr. Bear sees a note from Harold's mother indicating that Harold's father is in the hospital. Mr. Bear arranges Harold's schedule so that Harold receives some extra attention and is able to work on familiar tasks. Because Harold had a visual communication system in place, he got the support he needed, preventing misbehavior and misunderstandings. Both he and Mr. Bear had a good day!

Harriet, on the other hand, lacks an effective communication system. Last Friday at school another student, Sandra, broke Harriet's favorite radio. Harriet cried all afternoon and got even by pulling Sandra's hair and spitting on her. Ms. Fisher, Harriet's mother, didn't have a clue what had happened at school. When Harriet got off the bus at home, her mother greeted her and, with a big June Cleaver smile, asked, "Did you have a nice day, honey?" Harriet replied by sinking her teeth into her mother's cheek. It's safe to assume that Ms. Fisher would have been happier if Harriet had communicated her frustration and anger by showing her mother a symbol card that meant "I'm angry. I want to be alone."

Convenient Visual Communication Tools

This chapter will introduce three more types of visual tools that facilitate good communication: News Notes, Who's Where? Charts, and Labels.

News Notes


NEWS NOTE

Today I ate:

donut

pie

cake

NEWS NOTE

Today I went to:

library

swimming pool

school

friend's house

sporting event

playground

gym

music room

other

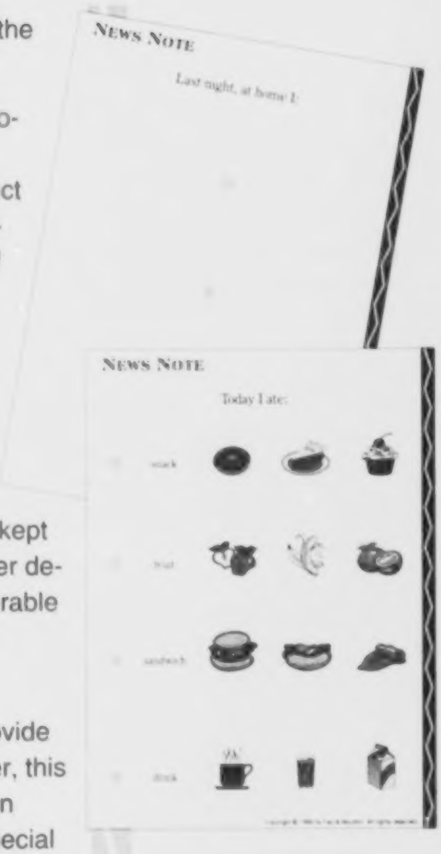
A basic part of any school-home communication system is the school-home form or note. This book offers a form for school-home communication called a News Note. Appendix B provides several variations of the News Note, and a laminated version is available in the Materials Kit. News Notes may be more efficient than traditional telephone calls or conferences and should be less time-consuming than traditional notes home that require a lot of writing. News Notes use pictures or symbols that can be circled; they also use fill-in-the-blank stories for the teacher's convenience. Eventually, these notes should become a familiar part of the communication routine for teachers, parents, therapists, and students, eventually improving the communication process.

Forms & Kit

Following are some types of News Notes that you can use for various purposes:

- A picture summary of the day's activities. This consists of a box or line chart with symbols or pictures that represent normal daily routines. Teachers or students can circle those activities that the student participated in on a given day.

- A one-page laminated form that lists sentence beginnings ("Today I went to ______________."), each one with a piece of hook-and-loop tape on which the student can attach the correct symbol, picture, or word. This News Note could include activities from the entire school day or work day or from just part of it (field trips, the lunch menu, etc.). This format can also be used for notes that come from home to school or home to work, either describing weekend events or daily routines. **Kit**
- Laminated index cards that have pictures or symbols, along with a fill-in-the-blank sentence and choices for sentence endings that can be circled or checked off. The cards can be kept in a file box and can describe more specific activities in greater detail. Using index cards with older students is sometimes preferable to a full-page format; the small cards are unobtrusive and do not draw unwanted attention to the student.


News Note

Last night, at home I:

News Note

Today I ate:

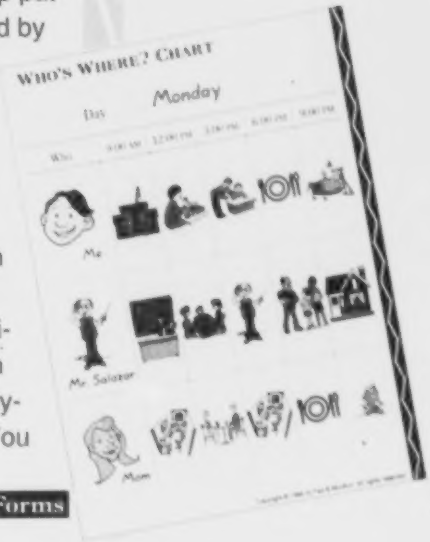
snack
fruit
sandwich
drink

A News Note that combines pictures or symbols with words can provide information about upcoming events or needs. Much like a newsletter, this note helps parents by giving them information they may need to plan ahead, purchase specific materials, send in money, or arrange a special lunch. For example, this type of News Note can be used to announce a field trip.

Parents and teachers can also use any of the News Note formats discussed previously to communicate about behavioral issues. A student's emotional or physical state, behavior patterns, or special considerations may not be readily apparent to observers but can easily be communicated with a visual tool. For example, changes in medication or sleep patterns often have a significant impact on behavior and may be noticed by parents, teachers, or supervisors, who can share this information with each other.

Who's Where? Charts

Who's Where? Charts let students know where significant people are going to be at specific times. Everyone's schedule changes from time to time. When people in their lives come and go, students with autism or other disabilities may become anxious, frightened, and agitated, perhaps escalating to misbehavior. Who's Where? Charts can provide information about family members, school personnel, employers, coworkers, or the student's friends on a daily or weekly basis. You can use words, pictures, symbols, or a combination of these when constructing the charts. **Forms**


Who's Where? Chart

Day Monday

Who

Me
Mr. Salazar
Mom

To use the Who's Where? Chart, fill in times of the day or days of the week along the top of the page. Along the left margin, put pictures or names of the student, teacher, family members, etc. Teach the student to use the chart by learning to follow one person at a time for a day. Gradually add other people to the schedule, especially those individuals most important in the student's life (e.g., primary caregivers). Hopefully, the student will learn to expect routines but handle change.

When the student is in general education settings, be sure to design and use a communication form that is user-friendly. If a technique takes too much time or is too complicated to use, general education teachers and parents will not use it. Be practical in your selection or construction of communication tools. For example, if using the Who's Where? Chart, provide the form and photos, then work with the general education teacher to make changes that simplify the chart's use.

Labels

To help students recognize people, places, and things, use labels throughout all environments. For many years, teachers of young children have identified items in classrooms by putting a printed card or label on them. However, for students who cannot identify or select items using only a printed word, adding a picture, symbol, or other visual cue can make the process easier. The visual cue can be a magazine or newspaper picture, a photograph, a line drawing, or a symbol. (Of course, if the student can read and knows the meaning of what he or she reads, then printed words are all you need and it is not necessary to add the visual cues).

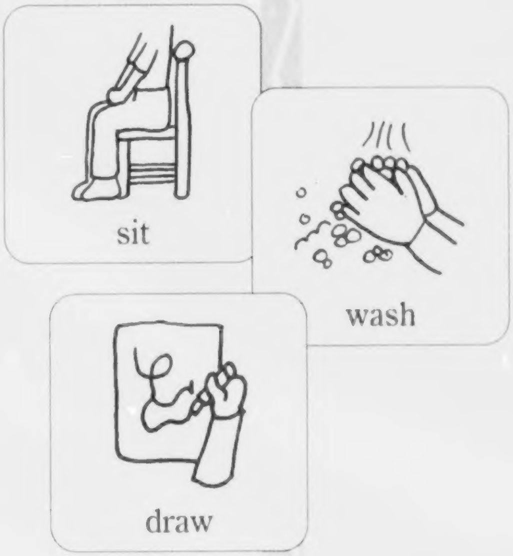
Once you have created these word-picture cards to use as labels, you can use them in several ways to increase students' receptive language skills. (Chapter 15 also includes a very simple teaching sequence designed to build students' receptive language skills.) Keep in mind, though, that as with any teaching tool, you can use the labels for many instructional activities. The sky is the limit!

After labeling the people, places, and things (the nouns) in the student's world, broaden your scope to include individual or group actions (the verbs). (Available in the Materials Kit are some examples of simple activities in which many students participate throughout a typical day. These Picture/Symbol Cards have both printed words and visual representations.) When you give a student a direction to do something, these labels can be very helpful because they provide additional cues (the word and picture). When verbal directions are not enough, the addition of visual cues to the printed word can help students understand what you expect them to do.

Kit

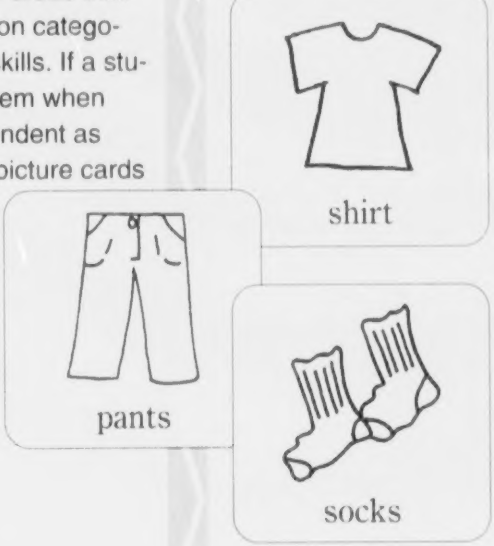
Begin by creating a set of action cards; this set should include verbs representing the most common activities the student engages in during the day. Always include some actions common to home as well as school. Following are some action words and phrases:

- Sit down
- Stand up
- Come here
- Go there
- Wait in line
- Raise your hand
- Begin your work
- Open the door
- Close the door
- Put your things away
- Get a drink
- Go to the bathroom
- Follow me



Constantly seek opportunities to expand your students' receptive language skills. Keep adding word-picture cards for new people, places, and things all the time. If you think of **categories** of nouns or verbs (activities) that your students commonly use, you can continue to expand your teaching options. Collaborate with students' families and share information, so that you can increase students' receptive language in areas that are most practical for them. Following are some of the common categories for which you may want to increase receptive language skills. If a student can identify items in these categories and then act on them when requested to do so, that student should become more independent as well as more cooperative. Try creating mini-libraries of word-picture cards in these categories:

- Family members and pets
- Principals, counselors, therapists, teachers, assistants, and fellow students
- Rooms; places in school or at work
- The bathtub, toilet, and sink
- Familiar buildings in the community
- Kitchen appliances



- Food items and cooking utensils
- Transportation modes
- School supplies
- Playground equipment
- Routine chores or jobs at home and at school
- Items of clothing
- Recreation and leisure equipment (radio, games, sports equipment)
- Jobsites
- Favorite restaurants and menu items
- Medical items (medications, bandages, etc.)

Alternative Formats

You can also vary the format of your communication tools. It is always helpful to keep things simple and convenient. Sometimes, this means designing your visual communication systems so that they are portable, indestructible, or easy to see. In order to meet a specific need, consider modifying the way that you construct or use the News Notes, Who's Where? Charts, and labels. There are several design options, all of which have advantages or disadvantages according to the age and cognitive level of the student. When deciding on the format of a student's individualized system, consider the factors of convenience, age appropriateness, and ease of modification (e.g., adding new cards and taking out old ones). Some of the possible formats and tools for collecting, maintaining, and conveniently using each student's set of communication tools in several different environments include:

- Small photo albums
- Wallets
- A metal ring that holds hole-punched cards
- Folders or portfolios with pockets
- Small (e.g., pocket-sized) loose-leaf binders
- Planners and calendars that have age appropriate designs

Whenever you construct systems of communication for your students, especially systems that combine words and pictures, make sure that the pictures are clear and easy to understand. If the photos, pictures, or symbols are not clear, then they will be just as confusing to the student as your verbal directions. The idea is to increase the student's chances of making a correct response. If the student does not understand verbal directions and then cannot make sense of the visual cues you provide, he or she may end up more frustrated than ever. When you use multisensory communication techniques, you should constantly evaluate their effectiveness by examining information about the student's progress. Ultimately, though, the student's behavior will be the best indicator that what you are doing is working.

This section has familiarized you with several visual tools and forms; the following section will address how you can use practical behavior management techniques to facilitate learning.

When the student is in general education settings, work with everyone on the team (teachers, parents, therapists, counselors, instructional assistants, etc.) to develop a plan that gradually withdraws the visual supports. Once a student can function successfully on his or her own with fewer visual supports then teachers, parents, and others should move to systems that use verbal language, including typical written calendars, appointment books, lists, reminders, and cue words.

33

THE SECOND LINK: USING PRACTICAL BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN

We behave in the ways we do for many reasons. Individuals whose communication skills are limited or ineffective may use behavior as their primary mode of communicating with others. Keeping in mind that the purpose of some behaviors is communication will help you as you try to teach new behaviors and increase or decrease old behaviors. Understanding what is being communicated by a particular behavior will also help you decide which skills to teach and how to teach them.

We humans use our patterns of behavior to communicate many ideas, thoughts, and preferences, including letting others know when we:

- Want to avoid or escape situations or people we don't like
- Are trying to get something we want
- Like attention from others
- Enjoy the excitement or stimulation of the behavior itself
- Are in the habit of doing something or it is familiar to us
- Find a particular behavior the easiest thing to do
- Haven't been taught another option
- Are feeling highly emotional or uncomfortable
- Have a biological predisposition to behave in a certain way
- Think our actions will meet a social or biological need we have
- Have been taught to do a certain thing by our families, teachers, or friends
- Are testing the limits of our religious, cultural, ethnic, or gender group

This section of the book will begin by discussing a method of behavior analysis to help you examine the communicative intent of a behavior. Subsequent chapters in this section will present some practical strategies for improving behavior: ways to select which behaviors to change, to teach replacement behaviors, and to use consequences most effectively. Many of the strategies outlined in this section are based on established practices but have been adapted specifically for students with autism, communication disorders, severe behavior disorders, cognitive disabilities, or other disabilities that impact communication.

CHAPTER 4

IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES AND INTENT OF SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

In order to change a specific behavior (whether you want to increase, decrease, or eliminate it), you must first know the purpose of that behavior and know what information the behavior is meant to communicate. This program presents a simple way to determine a behavior's purpose by identifying the entire pattern of behavior, including what happens before (the antecedents) and what happens afterward (the consequences). This strategy for analyzing the communicative intent of behavior is based on an old standby in education and psychology called the ABC model (antecedent, behavior, consequences). Behaviors are part of a set of events: the antecedents that precede them, then the behaviors themselves, and then the consequences. The ABC model views behavior as mainly controlled by its consequences. The consequences either increase, decrease, or have no effect on the behavior.

We have expanded on this idea and renamed it the ABC ➻ P model. ABC ➻ P looks at:

The **antecedents** of the behavior (What happens immediately before the behavior occurs?)

+ The **behavior** itself (this should be clearly defined and explained)

+ The **consequences** of the behavior (What happens as a result of the behavior?)

These three components, if examined carefully, should lead you to the **purpose** of the behavior.

How the ABC ➻ P Model Works

To understand how the ABC ➻ P model is useful in determining the communicative intent of a behavior, consider the following example:

Behavior

Begin by identifying the key behavior: *Let's say that about six months ago, your mother started to leave a copy of a popular home- and family-oriented magazine on your kitchen counter.* (This is the behavior). *The first time it happened, you didn't think much of it, but now your mother leaves this surprise out for you every month.*

Antecedents

Next, examine the antecedents: *Baffled by your mom's new behavior pattern, you're determined to get to the bottom of the magazine madness. At first, you think she is trying to give you a hint about your cooking skills, which are virtually nonexistent.* (This is a possible antecedent). *You also ponder whether your incessant complaining about another weekend spent without a date might have prompted her to leave the magazine out so that you'll discover the latest article on how to find a romantic relationship.* (This is another possible antecedent).

These are examples of antecedent events that may have elicited your mother's behavior. The trick here is to figure out which antecedent is triggering the behavior pattern, that is, which one is the purpose of her behavior.

If you can identify the antecedent that is most likely to trigger a certain behavior, you may be able to intervene and change the behavior just by changing that antecedent:

> *If your terrible cooking skills were the antecedent for your mother's behavior and you then enroll in cooking school, you have eliminated that antecedent and your mother will probably stop leaving you a magazine. However, suppose the actual antecedent were your incessant whining about being single. If, on your vacation to Las Vegas, you marry the Elvis impersonator who sat across the aisle from you on the airplane, you may never see another magazine in your kitchen.* (Of course, you may never see your mother again, either.)

Changing a behavior may be as simple as changing the circumstances that lead up to it. In the example presented here, if improving your cooking skills stopped your mom's magazine buying, then there would be no need to get married. However, if after a year of cooking school and a hundred great dinners, your mom is still pushing the magazine, then the most influential antecedent was probably your nonexistent love life. You will know which antecedent was the most critical by watching how your mother behaves.

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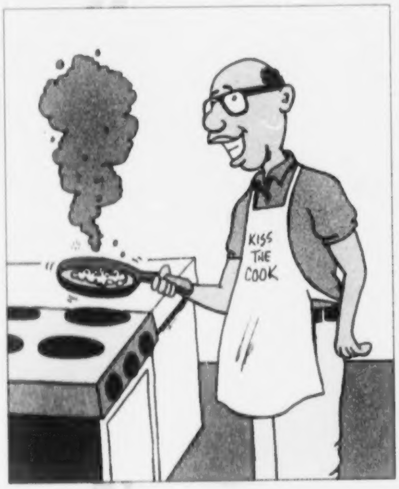
Consequences

What if you change the situation or circumstances occurring before a behavior, but the behavior still does not change in the way you want it to? In that case, you need to look at consequences:

> *After your mother leaves the magazine on the counter, do you pick it up and start clipping recipes? If so, this is one possible consequence of your mother's behavior. A completely different consequence would occur if you saw the magazine and launched into a conversation with your mother about how you have pined for a spouse and are finally ready to settle down and get married. On the other hand, if you get so excited about the latest fad diet touted on the cover of the magazine that you immediately give Mom a big hug and tell her thanks for sharing the magazine with you, another very different consequence has occurred.*

The events that occur after a behavior will help determine whether the behavior occurs more often, occurs less often, or stays about the same. If the consequences are desirable and positive, the behavior is likely to increase in frequency. If the consequences are undesirable or negative, the behavior is likely to decrease. If the consequences are neutral, sporadic, or unrelated, the behavior may stay the same or, in some cases, change slightly.



If the purpose of your mother's behavior was to improve your cooking skills and you pick up the magazine and clip out new recipes and make a wonderful dinner for Mom, then she will not only continue to leave this magazine on the counter each month, but you may also find a copy of a second publication too. (This consequence is increasing her behavior).

On the other hand, perhaps the purpose of your mother's behavior was really to give you a big hint that she wanted you to buy her the diamond tennis bracelet advertised on page 12 of every single issue of the magazine. However, you fail to make the big purchase. Pretty soon you no longer see a magazine from your mother. In this case, the desired consequence (your buying a bracelet for your mother) did not occur, and her magazine distribution behavior has been eliminated.

Sometimes, the easiest way to figure out the purpose of a behavior is to ask the person why he or she is doing whatever it is. In the example with you and your mom, a direct verbal question would be much simpler than trial and error guesses and sifting on your own through several possible reasons why your mom would be sharing the magazine with you. However, when students cannot communicate well or do not answer your questions, you have to rely on other means to figure out the purpose for their behavior. You must also consider the possibility that a specific behavior can have more than one purpose. (This stuff is never as easy as we'd like, is it?)

Often, the most effective way to determine the purpose of a behavior is to watch what happens just before and just after the behavior (ABC ➻ P), closely observing and attending to the effect that consequences have on the behavior. You will know if a given consequence serves the intended purpose or gets the intended results by observing whether the behavior continues or increases. However, if the behavior decreases or stops, you can probably bet that the consequence obtained was not what the student wanted.

Sometimes, observation alone may not provide enough information or it may take too long. For students whose behavior is dangerous, disruptive, or consistently noncompliant, you will need to go one step further and begin to try some different consequences and see how the behavior changes. The more systematically you can introduce each new consequence, the better your chances of determining its effects. (Following chapters will further discuss this relationship between consequences and behavior in the course of discussing specific behaviors.)

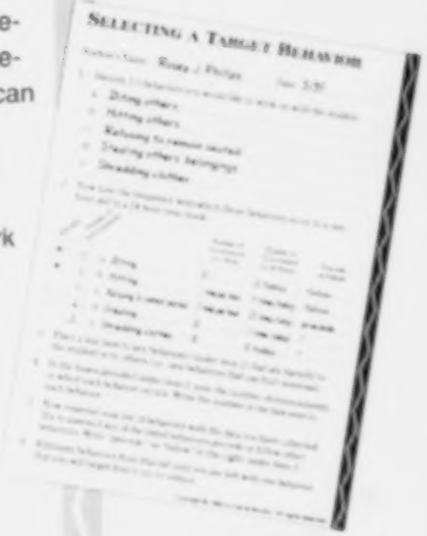
By correctly identifying the intended purpose of a student's behavior, you can select an intervention that is likely to be effective in changing that behavior. Without a systematic approach to analyzing the purpose of the behavior, you may end up using a hit or miss approach, which often results in less effective teaching and slower learning. (What if you married the Elvis impersonator and went to cooking school for a year when all your mom really wanted was a piece of jewelry?)

There may not be just one right way to change a behavior, but rather several options to consider. Using the ABC ➻ P model to look at antecedents, behaviors, and consequences to determine the purpose of a behavior can help you to consider different possibilities. With this approach, a behavior is not viewed as an isolated event but rather as one of many parts in a system of purposeful communication. Since there are several parts to this model and many interrelated factors impacting behavior, there are several ways you can approach the task of changing a behavior. It is important to keep this in mind, as behaviors are complex and situations change and sometimes your first approach may not work. Changing a behavior involves looking at all the possibilities and designing a systematic intervention based on careful consideration of many possible combinations of antecedents, behaviors, consequences, and purpose(s).

Putting the ABC ➻ P Model to Work for You

To use the ABC ➻ P model effectively, first identify exactly which behavior you would like to change. Though this may seem simple, it may not be as easy as you think. Nevertheless, identifying a key behavior that you are targeting for change is crucial to a successful outcome. Because behaviors often occur in groups or are imbedded in a series or string of behaviors that occur very quickly, picking out just one behavior to target can get tricky. For example, if a student is refusing to sit and work, hitting other students, then running to another part of the room, you may not know which behavior to focus on first. Running away is resulting in a power struggle, hitting others is dangerous, and refusing to sit and work seems to lead to everything else; it may be tough to decide which behavior is the key to all the others.

You may be tempted to try to fix everything all at once, but this approach may result in your feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. If you pick one target behavior and make it your priority, other related behaviors may often improve without any further intervention. Appendix B provides some questions that you might want to ask yourself as you zero in on your first target behavior. (See the form entitled Selecting a Target Behavior.)


SELECTING A TARGET BEHAVIOR

Forms

When determining the purpose of behavior:

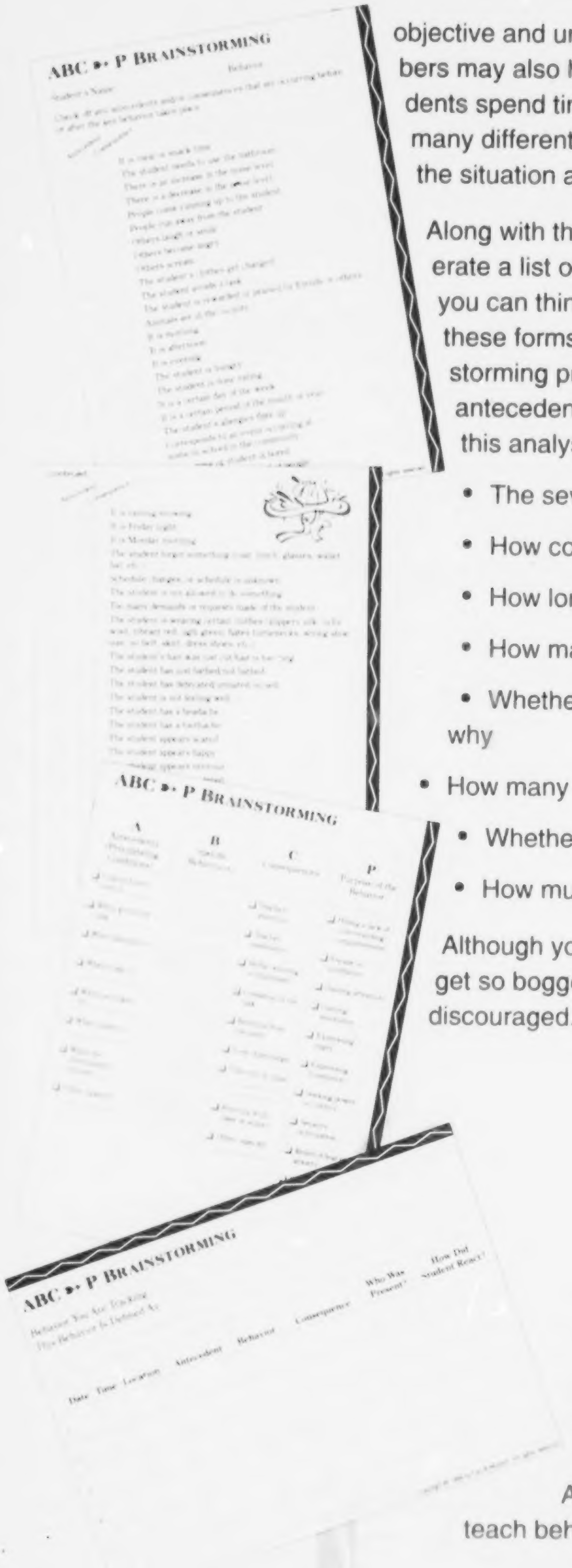
- Look at the As and Cs. If you have consistent, clear data, consider it.
- Consider the possibility that the behavior may serve several purposes
- Ask everyone involved for help

Once you have chosen your first key behavior, begin to look for a pattern. Take a step-by-step approach like the one described previously in the magazine example. Each component of the model is important, so look carefully at antecedents and consequences as you try to identify the purpose of the behavior and what the behavior is intended to communicate in a given environment or situation. Approach each problem with an open mind and without making assumptions.

Also keep in mind that one behavior can serve several functions. For example, you might smile when you are happy, smile when you are nervous, smile when you are shocked, and smile when you are embarrassed. The purpose of your smiling may vary with the situation, environment, and conditions. The purpose may also change over time. Here is a scenario involving a problem behavior that any parent would want to decrease in frequency and eventually eliminate:

> *Let's say that your adult daughter bites others from time to time. This is making it difficult for her to keep friends and stay employed. You assume that she bites others in order to communicate her frustration when tasks are too difficult, so you teach her to sign "Help, please," when she's frustrated. If, however, the true purpose of your daughter's biting behavior is to get everyone to leave the room so that she can be alone in a quiet space, teaching her to sign "Help, please," may have no effect or, worse yet, may actually result in more biting, not less.*

Correctly identifying the purpose of a behavior should involve everyone who interacts with a student, including parents, teachers, siblings, employers, coworkers, friends, and other professionals involved with the student. Involving as many people as possible as a team may provide more



objective and unbiased observations and hypotheses. Other team members may also have insights that have not occurred to you. Since students spend time in many different environments and situations with many different people, it makes sense that their behavior will vary with the situation and the people.

Along with the others on your team, use the ABC ➤ P model to generate a list of as many possible antecedents and consequences as you can think of. Appendix B contains three brainstorming forms; use these forms (entitled ABC ➤ P Brainstorming) or any other brainstorming process you know to make an exhaustive list of possible antecedents and consequences. How long you spend on this analysis will depend on several things, including:

Forms

- The severity of the behavior
- How complicated the behavior pattern is
- How long the behavior has been going on
- How many related behaviors are occurring
- Whether the people involved agree on what is happening and why
- How many environments the behavior is displayed in
- Whether other students are involved in the behavior
- How much time you have to spend on the brainstorming process

Although you should do a thorough analysis of the behavior, don't get so bogged down that you lose the big picture or become discouraged.

When the student is in general education settings, it is critical to involve everyone who works with him or her. Often, instructional assistants (paraprofessionals) work very closely with students who are in general education environments. Don't forget to get their input, as well as that of other students. Include support personnel such as librarians, special area teachers (PE, music, art), and specialists such as speech-language pathologists or other therapists.

Now that you have explored ways to crack the ABC ➤ P code, the following chapter will discuss how to teach behaviors that replace undesirable or ineffective behaviors.

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CHAPTER 5

TEACHING BEHAVIORS THAT REPLACE OTHER BEHAVIORS

Out With the Old, In With the New

Most teachers and parents do not merely teach new behaviors, but also are trying to eliminate an undesirable or inappropriate behavior. In this situation, it is not enough to simply focus on eliminating a behavior you don't want; for the maximum benefit you must also teach the student a behavior to replace it (something to do instead). When you attempt to teach a student a replacement behavior, select a behavior that serves the same purpose for the student as the undesirable or inappropriate behavior served. You are essentially swapping one (appropriate) behavior for another (inappropriate) behavior. This is one way of eliminating behaviors you find troublesome, inappropriate, or disruptive.

For example, you have learned over the years that when your adult student, Mitch, slaps his face, he wants something. If you want him to stop slapping himself in the face, you must teach him an acceptable replacement behavior. In effect, you are teaching another, less hazardous, way to say "I want _____."

If this strategy is going to work, the replacement behavior must serve the same purpose and must do so quickly enough to serve Mitch's purpose. Mitch's face slapping is so potentially hazardous that he immediately gets what he wants from people in his environment. When selecting a replacement behavior, select one that gets an equally rapid response. Otherwise, it is more effective for Mitch to continue to slap his face to get what he wants.

Some replacement behaviors you could teach Mitch include:

- *Sounding a buzzer* **Kit**
- *Clapping his hands together*
- *Saying "I want _________"*
- *Showing a symbol card for "I want"* **Kit**

- *Showing a card that contains the words "I want"*
- *Using the American Sign Language sign for "I want"*
- *Using an I Want folder that you have created for him to use*

Remember, if you are going to use a card or other communication tool, the tool must be readily accessible at all times. Otherwise, it will not be effective because Mitch will not use it.

Choosing a Replacement Behavior

For any given behavior there will usually be many possible replacements, so you should consider several possibilities. The most important consideration is, of course, the purpose that the behavior is serving (remember ABC ➞ P). An effective replacement behavior will serve exactly the same purpose as the behavior you want to eliminate. In order to generate ideas for replacement behaviors, review the possible purposes of the behavior with your team (Teams are discussed in Chapter 4). With their help, generate a list of a wide variety of possible replacement behaviors. Next, decide on your criteria for the new behavior you will teach. For example, if you want only quick and easy solutions or if you want only positive approaches, make that decision now. Finally, select the behavior from your list that you think will be just as effective as the student's present behavior. Be ready to problem solve, experiment, and use trial and error until you find a solution that works for you. (The miracle cure!)

For teachers and parents who are close to their students and children, it is sometimes difficult not to take students' behavior personally. Therefore, in seeking solutions to behavior problems, keep in mind that when you teach a student a new way of communicating you may hear things that (because of your close relationship) can hurt your feelings, embarrass you, or make you feel uncomfortable.

For example, if your student Garrett hits others when he is bored, the first thing you may want to try is designing lessons and activities that are more motivating, exciting, and varied. However, everyone gets bored once in a while, regardless of how motivating his or her environment is (just think of your office!), so your intervention with Garrett should include teaching him another way to let you know when he is bored.

Even though it is difficult to hear and acknowledge that your student is bored, you could teach him or her to:

- Show you a sign that says "I'm bored"
- Point to a picture of a cartoon character that looks bored
- Make the American Sign Language sign for "boring"

- Click a pocket clicker to let you know he or she is ready to move on to something else
- Make a prearranged gesture (e.g., the student could put his or her elbows on the table, prop his or her face up in his or her hands, sigh loudly, and wait for your attention)

Often, the most effective replacement behavior is one that is incompatible with the behavior you want to replace or eliminate. The incompatible behavior is one that cannot be done at the same time as the target behavior. Teaching an incompatible behavior should make it impossible for the student to engage in the undesirable or objectionable behavior, and it should provide a positive alternative so that **new** and different undesirable behaviors don't begin.

For example, when Jared is entering a new environment or starting a new routine, he may become very nervous and anxious. When this happens, Jared's hands get busy: he taps, snaps, picks at his eyebrows, pinches the skin on his wrists, rubs the table, rolls the collar of his shirt, or flaps his hands incessantly.

A good replacement behavior meets this criterion: If he is doing **this**, *he can't be doing* **that**. *In this example a good replacement behavior will soothe Jared's anxiety, serve the same purpose as the hand motions, and also be incompatible with these hand motions. Here are some possible replacement behaviors for Jared:*

- *Squeezing a stress ball*
- *Rubbing a worry stone*
- *Holding a small bean bag*
- *Playing with a hand-held puzzle*
- *Holding a foam rubber ball*

When the student is in general education settings, be sure to select replacement behaviors that are not noisy, disruptive, distracting, or just plain weird. Sometimes people in special education can lose perspective about which behaviors are considered socially acceptable in settings outside of special education. If you want students to fit in, you must continually consider what is "cool" with their general education peers and teachers.

Teaching Replacement Behaviors in Group Situations

Sometimes there may be several students in the same group who all have at least one behavior you would like to decrease or eliminate. The key to group instruction is planning ahead, not only to decide on your instructional strategies but also to anticipate problems and have solutions ready to go. Here are some key principles:

- First, you need a schedule. The schedule should be posted and be visible to both adults and students. In addition, the schedule should include pictures, symbols, and any other necessary visual tools so that the students, as well as the adults, can understand the schedule. (See Chapter 2 for ideas for creating visual schedules.) If there are several adults in the classroom or workplace, each adult should have a clear assignment that includes whom to work with, what to do when, and how to handle anticipated problems.

- Second, plan ahead so that all staff members reinforce specific behaviors consistently. Using tangible reinforcers is a good option because these systems also encourage staff consistency as well as student consistency. If staff (or parents, therapists, and teachers) are distributing tangible reinforcers like tokens, tickets, or coupons, it's easy to keep track of how often students have been reinforced. Just check the staff's supply of rewards at the beginning of the day or the activity, then check it again at the end. Here is a simple idea for reinforcing individual students while they are part of a group:

  At the beginning of each hour, each staff member gets ten tickets that will be used in a lottery drawing at the end of the day. Each staff member must distribute his or her ten tickets by the end of the hour, and each ticket must be given to a student along with praise for a specific behavior. At the end of the hour, students write their initials on the tickets they earned and then put their tickets into The Really Big Jar (or whatever you'd like to call yours) for the drawing. Drawing prizes can include puzzles, gum, a soda pop, greeting cards, sticky notes, and radio time.

- Third, when considering which replacement behaviors to teach in a group situation, try to avoid behaviors that have the potential to cause disruption. For example, you wouldn't want to give Jared (your hand flapper) a big, green, puffy foam-rubber ball if you knew that C.J. and Francine would do anything to get their hands on one. Other replacement behaviors to use with caution are those that make noise, allow movement, may look weird to other students, build excitement, or make a mess.

When the student is in general education settings, it is important to consider which classes and teachers match the student's style and personality and try to place the student accordingly. For example, if a student is active and full of energy, assign him or her to a bubbly, perky teacher who feels comfortable allowing movement in class. A more quiet student would be more at home with a teacher who speaks softly and is patient.

Teaching Methods for Replacement Behaviors

Regardless of which specific skill you are teaching, the approach is the same for teaching replacement behaviors as it is for teaching new behaviors. Chapters 7 and 8 will explain what, where, when, and how to use structured teaching effectively. Keep in mind that over the long haul, behavior is more likely to change if the approach is consistent and systematic.

The following chapter will discuss the effective use of consequences.

CHAPTER 6

USING CONSEQUENCES EFFECTIVELY

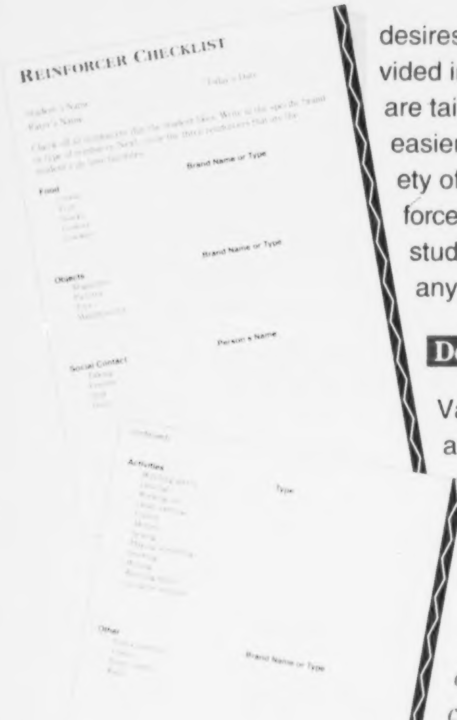
Possibly the most powerful intervention in this program is the use of consequences to change the target behavior and to teach other new behaviors. Modeling, redirection, and direct instruction are good teaching techniques by themselves, but they are not likely to have a lasting impact without your adding positive reinforcement. Effective use of consequences can change behavior and make learning easier, quicker, and more fun. This chapter will explain how to use the two best known and most frequently used types of consequences: positive reinforcement and punishment.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a consequence that follows a behavior and has the effect of increasing the behavior. Positive reinforcement has several advantages. For example, it is:

- Easy to use
- Fun for both you and your student
- Proactive rather than reactive
- Likely to increase your student's self-confidence
- Likely to change behavior more quickly than other approaches
- Designed to focus on positive rather than negative interactions, which may leave you both feeling happier
- Positive!!

One of the most important principles of positive reinforcement is that the power of a reinforcer depends in large part on the individual preferences of the person receiving the reinforcement. Everybody wants something; the trick is figuring out what a particular person wants. Selecting reinforcers for a specific student must be done with his or her unique needs and



REINFORCER CHECKLIST

Brand Name or Type

Food

Brand Name or Type

Objects

Person's Name

Social Contact

Activities

Type

Other

Brand Name or Type

desires in mind. To help you do this, a Reinforcer Checklist form is provided in Appendix B. Use this form to select positive reinforcements that are tailor-made for your student. Finding out what each student values is easier if you ask for others' input, too. Gathering information from a variety of sources increases the likelihood that you will find a positive reinforcer that really works, so make sure you check with parents, other students, assistants, therapists, grandparents, neighbors, or anyone else who sees the student regularly.

Forms

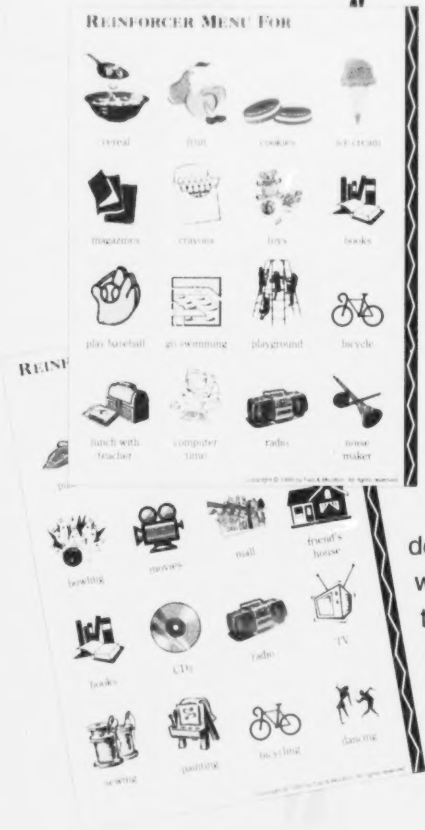
Don't Wear it Out

Variety is not just the spice of life; it is critical to motivating students and to shaping their behavior. Without variety, students may become tired, bored, or "overdosed" on the reinforcer that you are using. One way to ensure variety is to use a menu of reinforcers that students can choose from when they have earned some positive reinforcement.

For example, let's say that your favorite junk food is sinfully rich chocolate ice cream, swirled with layers of cappuccino, laced with chunks of macadamia nuts. If you were to eat this treat twice per day for a week, you might reach the point at which you never want to see another spoonful of the stuff, regardless of how hungry you are (not these authors, of course, but other people!).

This phenomenon, called "satiation," may occur if you fail to maintain a varied selection of reinforcers or if you use too much of one reinforcer for too long. Before you begin your lessons, select and assemble a wide array of positive reinforcers (more reinforcers than you ever think you will need). Then if your student tires of one, move on to the next! Two sample reinforcement menu formats are shown here; these are available in Appendix B.

Forms



REINFORCER MENU FOR

How Frequently Should You Reinforce?

Deciding how often to use positive reinforcement depends on several factors, including where you are in the teaching process. When you are beginning to teach a new skill, use your positive reinforcers consistently, each time the student demonstrates the behavior. This continuous schedule of reinforcement lets the student know exactly what you want him or her to do and gives a reward for doing it; this helps the student to learn more quickly. Once the student is demonstrating the skill consistently, move to an intermittent or variable schedule of reinforcement. This is the preferred method for maintaining a skill once it has been learned. A good way to keep yourself on track is to use a tally sheet or a timer, to help you remember to deliver the positive reinforcement on a predetermined schedule. It is easy to forget to reinforce

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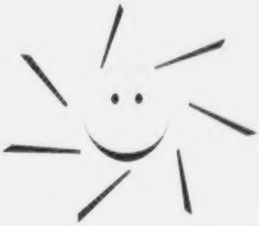
once you are reinforcing only every third or fifth time you see the behavior, but keep in mind that without your maintaining a consistent schedule, your reinforcement may not work at all. Eventually you can lengthen the time intervals between reinforcers, until reinforcement is no longer needed.

Tangible Reinforcers



Even though you may use tangible positive reinforcers, verbal praise, hugs, and smiles should **always** be given along with the tangibles. If the student's skill deficits are great and his or her communication skills are limited, food or drink can serve as rewards for demonstrating a skill and can quickly establish a pattern of learning. However, always consider using other reinforcers as well, including activities, responsibilities, time with special people, favorite toys, etc. Whenever you reward the student, be sure to continue the praise, hugs, and smiles. These social reinforcers will always be powerful, regardless of the food or toy that comes with them.

Using Positive Reinforcement

Through the systematic use of positive reinforcement, you can shape students' behaviors, eventually increasing, decreasing, eliminating, or changing them. Following are some examples of how positive reinforcement can work. The first example describes a situation in which a behavior is **increased**:

> *You have heard one of your students, Raymundo, who is four years old and has autism, say "drink" when he wants his favorite juice (mango guava) between meals. Usually, however, he holds up his glass, gestures, and makes a high-pitched squeal. You respond by scrambling to get the juice to him as quickly as possible so he stops that piercing squealing. You are sick of hearing the squealing and would love to hear the word "drink" used instead.*
>
> *For positive reinforcement try the following: When Ray brings you his cup and starts to squeal, you take the cup away, model the desired behavior by saying the word "drink" slowly and clearly, then wait for Ray to repeat it. If "drink" is what you hear next, you will immediately praise him profusely, hand him a cup of mango guava juice, give him a hug, smile, turn a cartwheel, or do whatever else you know Ray likes.*
>
> *If Ray gestures again and continues to squeal, you may want to buy some earplugs so that you can ignore the squealing. Of course, you should no longer give him juice when he gestures and squeals; nor should you reprimand or discuss it with him. (However, you will still want to provide other drinks at mealtime and thoughout the day, especially water).*

In the previous example, a key point should be noted: You know that Ray already knows how to say "drink." You are increasing a behavior that has already been learned. Following is an example of how to **decrease** behavior by using positive reinforcement:

> *Alicia is in your elementary class. She has begun a new nasty habit: spitting. It has gotten so bad that she now spits as many as 60 times each hour, usually when adults get close to her. You want her to stop spitting and you would like to accomplish this by using positive reinforcement. You already know that she would do just about anything for a crispy, delicious pork rind. So you go out and buy the biggest bag of pork rinds that you can find. Then, sit down with Alicia (far enough away to avoid a hit) and explain that you are going to reward her every time she spits fewer than ten times in ten minutes. (If necessary, put ten bright green balls in a jar, demonstrating how you will take one out each time she spits.)*
>
> *Next, use a clock to show Alicia what ten minutes looks like. Then set a timer for ten minutes, and proceed to do whatever it is you normally do. If Alicia spits nine or fewer times, give her a high five, a big smile, lots of praise, and a pork rind. The next week, tell Alicia that if she wants a pork rind she can spit no more than seven times each ten-minute period.*

In the preceding example, you could raise your expectations by using any of these variations:

- Increasing the amount of time Alicia must go without spitting
- Decreasing the number of times Alicia can spit and still earn a pork rind
- Using a stopwatch instead of a timer, so Alicia doesn't know when you are evaluating her **Kit**
- Continuing the praise and high fives but decreasing the number of times you give Alicia a pork rind

Decreasing a behavior with positive reinforcement can work if you require students to withhold a behavior for a specified length of time (don't do it at all), reduce the frequency of the behavior (do it less often), or do it with less intensity (do it in a less disruptive way).

Successive Approximations

Positive reinforcement also works for teaching brand new behaviors, by using a strategy called "successive approximations." This technique involves positive reinforcement of behaviors that are close to, but not exactly the same as, the specific behavior you want to see. Another term for this strategy is "shaping." This implies that you are molding behavior that resembles the key behavior. By your correctly using positive reinforcement, eventually your student will demonstrate behaviors closer and

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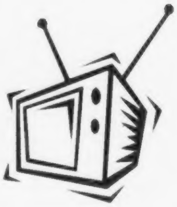
closer to what you are looking for. The following example relates to a skill that parents might try to address at home:

> *Your daughter Michelle is so happy to get home after work that she usually comes in like a tornado, destroying everything in her path. She can't wait to turn on the television. You are usually left standing in the foyer, looking into the living room where you see her coat and shoes on the floor, her purse flung onto the sofa, and her with her feet propped up on the coffee table and a smile on her face. You have a lovely antique coat rack sitting in the foyer but, alas, this is a foreign object to Michelle.*
>
> *You decide to teach Michelle one new behavior: hanging up her coat. Start by showing her how to hang her coat on the coat rack and by walking her through the steps of the procedure with some gentle physical prompting. Then explain to her that, beginning tomorrow, she will only get to watch television if the coat lands in the foyer instead of the living room. Michelle listens carefully and, during the first week, gets to watch television four out of five days.*
>
> *The next week, again review with Michelle how to hang up the coat correctly. Also up the ante by explaining to Michelle that from now on the coat must touch some part of the coat rack when it lands, or no television. (Demonstrate what's acceptable and unacceptable.)*
>
> *Michelle does a great job the second week, earning television five days in a row. Finally, begin the last phase of your teaching. Now, Michelle must hang her coat on the coat rack if she wants to watch her favorite show. By this time, she is used to a routine and has been getting close, so Michelle begins to demonstrate this new skill easily and successfully.*



Teaching in successive approximations really works. It may take some time to teach skills this way, but if you keep moving in the right direction, you'll eventually get where you are going! (It's like that old family recipe for barbecuing a good brisket…if you keep trying, yours will eventually taste just like Uncle Bubba's!)

When the student is in general education settings, there are many skills that can be taught by using the successive approximations strategy. The key here is planning ahead so that everyone teaches steps in a logical order, then keeps track of the student's step-by-step progress. It is also important that everyone involved record and evaluate data on a regular basis. If the long-term goal is reached, the teachers can set a new goal; if progress slows down or stops, then the plan should be revised.

Punishment

Punishment is a consequence that decreases the frequency of the behavior it follows. Although many people think of punishment as hitting, spanking, or isolating someone for an extended period of time, we do not recommend these strategies nor espouse the use of corporal punishment or isolation. There are other options for punishment; we recommend these because they are less intensive:

- Verbal reprimands (one or two, not a constant barrage)
- Removal or restriction of privileges
- Cost response systems that take away previously provided positive reinforcers (often in the form of tokens)
- Restitution
- Correction
- Certain types of time out

The goal in this book is not to discuss each punishment technique in detail, but rather to provide some examples and explain general principles and guidelines.

Although it may not be your first choice of interventions, sometimes punishment may be necessary. There are times when punishment is not only necessary; it is sometimes the best tool for the job. For example, you may want to use punishment when you are faced with behaviors that are:

- Dangerous to the student
- Dangerous to others
- Destructive to property
- So unacceptable in society that the student would be confined or restricted if the behavior continued

If you decide to use punishment, keep some key principles in mind. If punishment is used incorrectly, the target behavior may not decrease and, in fact, may even get worse. In addition, the student may also develop a resistance or *immunity* to a punisher you try. Consequently, that particular punishment will not be as effective the next time you use it. Follow these guidelines when using punishment:

- Explain the new "rule" to the student, so that he or she has a clear understanding of the consequence for the specific behavior you want to eliminate. For many students, this should include a visual representation of the new expectation and consequence.

- Implement the punishment immediately after the behavior occurs. The more closely the two events are linked, the more powerful the impact of the punishment.
- Follow through with the punishment. Resist the temptation to give the student a second chance or to go easy on him or her.
- Be consistent! Deliver the punishment each and every time the target behavior occurs. This will help the student to learn faster.
- Think about using your most powerful punishment first. This will help prevent the student from becoming immune to or developing a tolerance for milder punishers. It may also help because you may stop the behavior immediately, eliminating the need for further punishment.

Try to use one punishment for one specific behavior, making sure that you have described that one behavior clearly. Behaviors tend to occur in clusters or patterns along with other behaviors, so be specific about which behavior you are targeting. For example, telling a student to "cut it out now" does not clearly communicate what you want the student to stop doing, especially if he or she is doing five things at once. Here is an example that most parents might find vaguely familiar:

Elizabeth is riding in the back seat while you drive to the Farmers' Market, singing along with her favorite song, a lovely Hank Williams tune. However, she suddenly expands on her singing routine by throwing a toy out the window every time Hank hits a high note. If you say, "Elizabeth, stop that right now or you'll be sorry!" she may not know if she is supposed to stop sitting, stop singing, or stop throwing things out the window. She may also not know exactly what is going to make her feel sorry.

A better approach might be to say, "Elizabeth, if you throw one more toy out the window, I'm going to turn off the tape and take your toys away until we get home."

If your lovely daughter does not seem at all fazed by your warning and continues to throw items out the window while Hank sings, stop the car, turn off the tape, and remove her toys from the back seat. Also tell her, "I am turning off the tape and removing your toys because you chose to throw your toys out the window. I will return the toys to you when we get home." (Say what you mean and mean what you say!)

Although effective in the short term, punishment may have limited effectiveness in the long term. Punishment should be used carefully, and should be used only if you have been sufficiently educated in its use. Keep in mind that punishment's usefulness is very limited because its

only purpose is to reduce or eliminate behavior. Punishment cannot help you teach a new behavior.

Power Struggles

Anytime you try to "make" someone do something, there is the potential for a power struggle to develop. You know you are in an unproductive power struggle when you and the other person involved find yourselves threatening, getting angry, escalating, or digging in your heels (simply being stubborn for no good reason). As a result, nothing productive is accomplished and change is slowed down or stopped. In addition, the emotional toll is draining. You and the other person may be left feeling hurt, angry, embarrassed, or humiliated. Power struggles may occur when:

- There is not a clear understanding of the expectations and consequences for either or both people involved
- You do not stick to your plan
- You find yourself becoming inflexible or controlling
- One of you does not deliver what you promised
- Your communication is confrontational or overly demanding (e.g., saying, "Do it right now because I said so" will likely set up a power struggle but saying, "If you choose to keep doing that, remember that the consequence is . . ." may decrease the likelihood of a protracted conflict)
- You try to teach when you are already angry, tired, distracted, or stressed out

The best policy is to plan ahead, communicate your plan effectively, then stick to it! Keep your emphasis on teaching the student what to do. Remember, every action a person takes is a choice being made, and with that choice comes some sort of consequence, whether positive or negative.

The following section of this book describes how to use a structured teaching model for direct instruction.

THE THIRD LINK: USING A STRUCTURED TEACHING MODEL FOR DIRECT INSTRUCTION

The following three chapters will give you an in-depth look at the teaching model presented in this program. This model will then be used to teach the skills in Chapters 10-15. Each skill in the book follows this same sequence and presents the same key principles of effective teaching.

Chapter 7 describes the **What?**, **Where?**, and **When?** of structured teaching: **What?** describes the skills in each chapter; the **What?** section of each chapter will help you decide what skills to teach. **Where?** tells where these skills might best be taught; this step in the teaching model will help you make decisions about the teaching environment. **When?** suggests times when skills can be taught most effectively.

Chapter 8 discusses the **How?** of structured teaching. **How?** presents the steps for teaching each skill cluster. Each teaching sequence will follow the same basic steps:

1. Stop
2. Look
3. Listen
4. Watch Me Do It
5. Let Me Help You
6. Now You Show Me
7. You Got It! You Get It!

Chapter 8 also discusses how to monitor behavior and keep track of students' progress.

CHAPTER 7

THE WHAT?, WHERE?, AND WHEN? OF STRUCTURED TEACHING

WHAT?

The What?: How to Choose Which Skills to Teach

There are several key questions that can help you decide **what** to teach. For example, ask yourself the following:

- Does your student have the skills needed to even begin the learning process (e.g., listening, making eye contact, etc.)?
- Are there prerequisite skills the student needs to learn before tackling more complicated tasks (e.g., learning to identify tasks that are part of a schedule before using the schedule itself)? If so, what skills should come first?
- Is there a skill that is useful in many environments, rather than just at home or at school (e.g., saying "hello" to a store cashier, one's brother, and the principal at school vs. feeding Freddy, the family's pet iguana)?
- Has the student mastered basic functional skills that will help him or her be independent? If not, should you teach one of those skills first (e.g., teaching a student to dress himself or herself before you teach him or her how to pet Ralphie, the class hamster)?

SEE/HEAR CHART

Skill

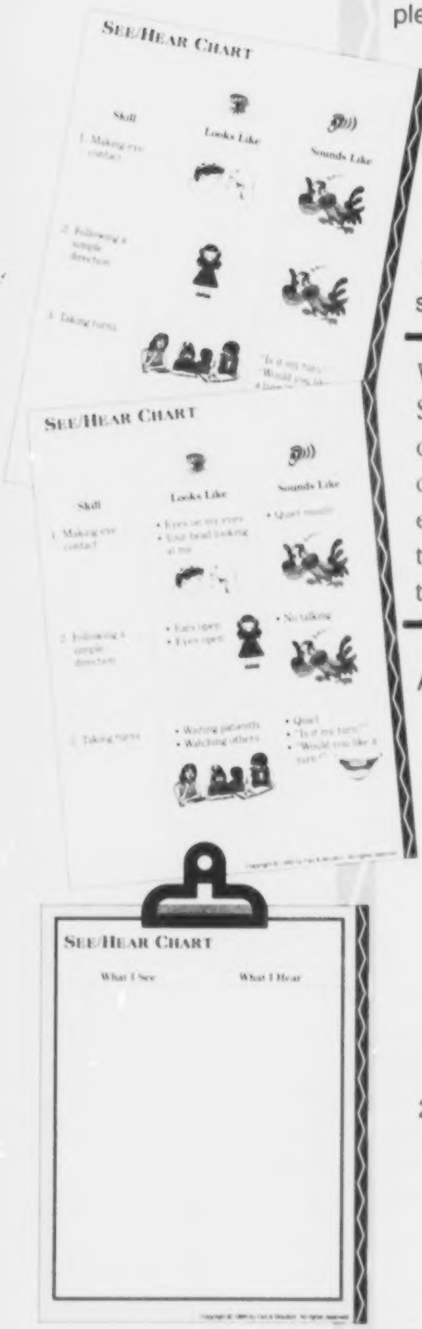
Looks Like

Sounds Like

See/Hear Chart

One tool that teachers often use to help them decide what skills they really want students to learn is a simple T-chart. This is a tool developed for group learning, especially for teaching social skills. In this program it's called the See/Hear Chart because it asks you what you want to see and what you want to hear. Filling out the chart is important, so that you focus on individual, teachable skills; without a clear description of what you want it's difficult to know how to get it.

Using the See/Hear chart, decide exactly what you want your student to say and/or do that will help him or her get ready to learn.


See/Hear Chart
Skill
Looks Like
Sounds Like
1. Making eye contact
2. Following a simple direction
3. Taking turns
See/Hear Chart
Skill
Looks Like
Sounds Like
1. Making eye contact
• Eyes on my eyes
• Your head looking at me
2. Following a simple direction
• Ears open
• Eyes open
• No talking
3. Taking turns
• Waiting patiently
• Watching others
• Quiet
• "Is it my turn?"
• "Would you like a turn?"
See/Hear Chart
What I See
What I Hear

Then write down what the skill looks like and what it sounds like. Examples are pictured here. (You can also use photographs.) If your student has poor verbal skills or cannot read or write well enough to understand the written directions, then it is important that you not use words alone on the See/Hear chart; add some visual cues as well. As you follow the structured teaching steps in Chapters 10-15 for teaching specific skills, use the See/Hear chart to communicate to the student exactly what behavior you want him or her to demonstrate. Before beginning to teach each skill, show the student the chart so he or she knows exactly what you want to see and what you want to hear.

When the student is in general education settings, teachers can use the See/Hear chart in a group activity. By leading a discussion of what the classroom rules are and expecting students to contribute ideas, teachers can get everyone involved. Students can take ownership of the classroom environment and encourage each other, so that everyone fits in. Peers of the student who has a disability can discuss behaviors openly, expressing their concerns and support.

After you have completed the See/Hear chart, follow these two guidelines to see if you're on the right track:

1. Ask yourself: "Have I stated the behavior positively?" (In other words, did you identify a behavior to increase, not just a behavior to eliminate?) This is important, because it is often easier to teach students to start doing something than it is to **stop** them from doing something. For example, if a student talks out in class, teach that student to raise his or her hand to get your attention instead of just telling the student to stop calling out. In addition, using a positive approach is usually more motivating for the student and more fun for both of you.
2. Make sure that your See/Hear Chart is very clear and explicit. For example, if you want a student to look at you so you know he or she is paying attention, say so. If you want a student to sit down quietly to demonstrate paying attention, say so. Decide on specific behaviors, then describe them clearly and explicitly. Use terms that describe observable behaviors in measurable ways.

As a final check, use the "stranger test." There's only one question on the stranger test (good news—you have a 50-50 chance of acing it): "If a perfect stranger read my See/Hear Chart, could the stranger watch this student and know if he or she were demonstrating the skill?" If the answer is "yes," you have described the skill and its associated behaviors well. If the answer is "no," you probably have not described the skill in terms of observable behaviors. For a simple direction-following skill like opening the door when asked, an effective See/Hear chart might say, "The student opens the door immediately after my first request." If the student stands in front of the door for ten minutes and only opens it after three requests, any stranger would know that the student is not following your directions, because you've described the behavior clearly.

Task Analysis

Another technique that is useful in deciding what to teach is to break down (task analyze) the skill into smaller steps. Breaking down skills into smaller steps is a strategy that teachers have used for years (The five-dollar term for this is "task analysis.") For example, if you want to teach someone to make a fluffer nutter sandwich (yummy marshmallow creme and peanut butter), you have to know what the steps are first. The most effective way to break a skill down is to slowly perform it yourself and, as you walk through each step, write it down. (For example, to identify the steps in making your fluffer nutter sandwich, begin by taking the jars of peanut butter and marshmallow creme out of the cupboard, putting them on the counter, and taking a knife from the drawer.) Appendix B includes a What Do I Do? form that you can use to list the procedure for your task.

Forms

Plan on spending about 20 minutes figuring out the steps for most tasks. If you get bogged down and it takes you much longer than 20-30 minutes to fill out the form, stop: You are probably getting too detailed and your steps are probably not observable and concrete enough. Back up and try again later. (Keep it simple; don't tear your hair out over it!)

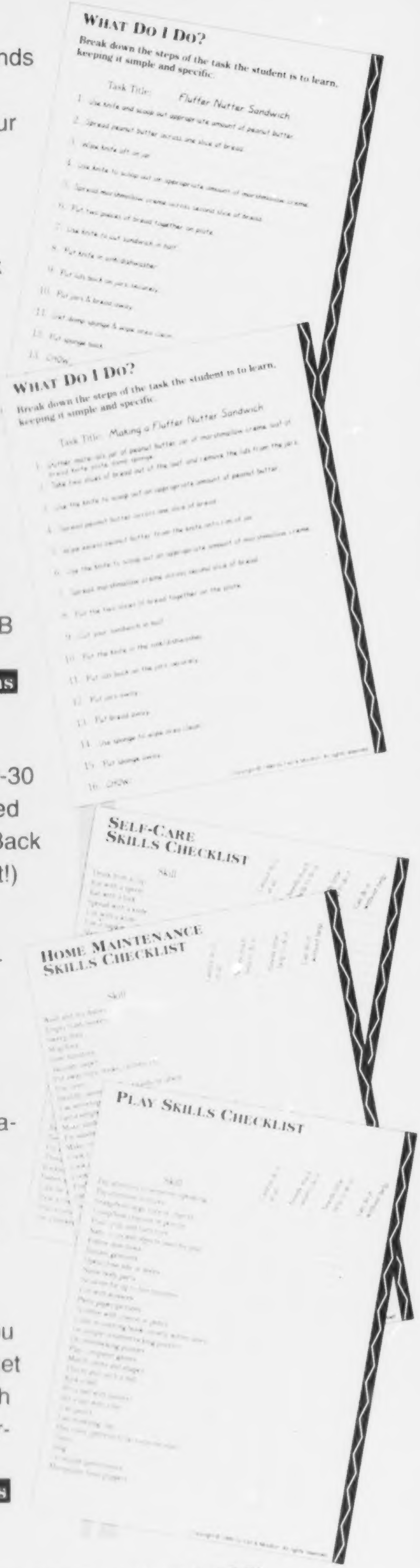
The decision of how detailed to get and which step should be your starting point requires objective consideration of your student's abilities and level of independence. Shown here are two task analyses for making a fluffer nutter sandwich: one that presents the task in fewer, more general steps and one that shows the steps in a more detailed style, with smaller increments of behavior. When a student needs instruction in how to complete very small steps, you will probably need more time to teach the skill; however, the student should still master the skill if you have been realistic about his or her prior knowledge and cognitive ability.

Forms

Skill Checklists

Appendix B also provides some basic checklists that should help you decide what skills to teach in some domains. These checklists will get you thinking about which skills your student has mastered and which ones he or she has not. The checklists also allow for some consideration of how much assistance or prompting is necessary for successful performance of each skill.

Forms



WHAT DO I DO?

Break down the steps of the task the student is to learn, keeping it simple and specific.

Task Title: Fluffer Nutter Sandwich

1. Use knife and scoop out appropriate amount of peanut butter
2. Spread peanut butter across one slice of bread
3. Wipe knife off on jar
4. Use knife to scoop out an appropriate amount of marshmallow creme
5. Spread marshmallow creme across second slice of bread
6. Put two pieces of bread together on plate
7. Use knife to cut sandwich in half
8. Put knife in sink/dishwasher
9. Put lids back on jars securely
10. Put jars & bread away
11. Get damp sponge & wipe area clean
12. Put sponge back
13. Chow

WHAT DO I DO?

Break down the steps of the task the student is to learn, keeping it simple and specific.

Task Title: Making a Fluffer Nutter Sandwich

SELF-CARE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill

HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill

PLAY SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill

58

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What to Teach First

After you have filled out the See/Hear Chart, completed a task analysis, and/or finished the checklists, next decide what skill to teach first. Deciding what to teach first seems as if it should be easy, but in fact it may not be. (There's always something, isn't there?) Try choosing your first skill based on one of these judgments:

- You have seen this skill demonstrated once in a while but it's not used consistently yet. (This tells you that it's not impossible for the student to do.)
- You think that this skill will be an easy one for the student to master. (All of us need to succeed at something.)
- You think that learning this skill will lead to the use of other skills. (Prerequisite skills are the building blocks for other, more difficult skills.)

Another consideration is whether the skill is a "standalone" skill or whether it is part of a sequence. For example, making eye contact is a standalone skill because it is a single event that follows a single direction or request ("Look at me."). On the other hand, skills necessary for getting dressed are part of a skill sequence or are one step in a series: It's impossible for anyone to get dressed by doing one single thing.

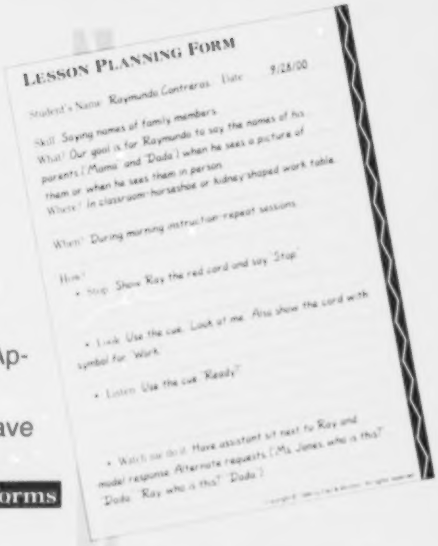
When you teach skills that are part of a sequence, you can start either at the beginning of the sequence or at the end. Teaching a sequence of skills in a step-by-step approach is often called "chaining." Teaching a complicated task by using chaining is often more effective than teaching separate skills in isolation, because chaining "makes sense" to your student. Chaining several steps together results in a realistic event and also provides lots of cues and reminders. Using the previous example of the fluffer nutter sandwich, you would begin by teaching your student to take the peanut butter jar from the cupboard (the first step), then teaching him or her to take the peanut butter jar out and place it on the table (the first and second steps). This step-by-step approach would continue as each step in the chain is mastered.

In a backward chaining sequence, you teach the last step first. In the sandwich example, this would be cleaning up the counter with a sponge. After the student can wipe the counter clean, then teach him or her to put the bread away and then wipe the counter. Either way, backward or forward, the important point is to take a step-by-step approach to teaching, especially when the task involves many steps. Some parents and teachers believe that when they teach the last step first, students are more motivated to perform a skill because they know the final outcome and can remember why they are doing what they are doing.

Remember: whenever possible, teach a skill in its natural context, including:

- The same environment where the skill will be used
- The same materials that are normally available (use the real thing, not imitations, copies, or "play" items)

Once you have your first skill to teach, write it down on your Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form. These forms (provided in Appendix B) will eventually be completely filled out and will guide you through the structured teaching model as you teach. Now that you have identified one skill to teach first, it's important to consider where, when, and how you will teach.



LESSON PLANNING FORM

Student's Name: Raymundo Contreras Date: 9/28/00

Skill: Saying names of family members

What? Our goal is for Raymundo to say the names of his parents ("Mama" and "Dada") when he sees a picture of them or when he sees them in person.

Where? In classroom-horseshoe or kidney-shaped work table.

When? During morning instruction-repeat sessions.

How?

- Stop: Show Ray the red card and say "Stop."
- Look: Use the cue, "Look at me." Also show the card with symbol for "Work."
- Listen: Use the cue "Ready?"
- Watch me do it: Have assistant sit next to Ray and model response. Alternate requests ("Ms. Jones, who is this?" "Dada." "Ray, who is this?" "Dada.")

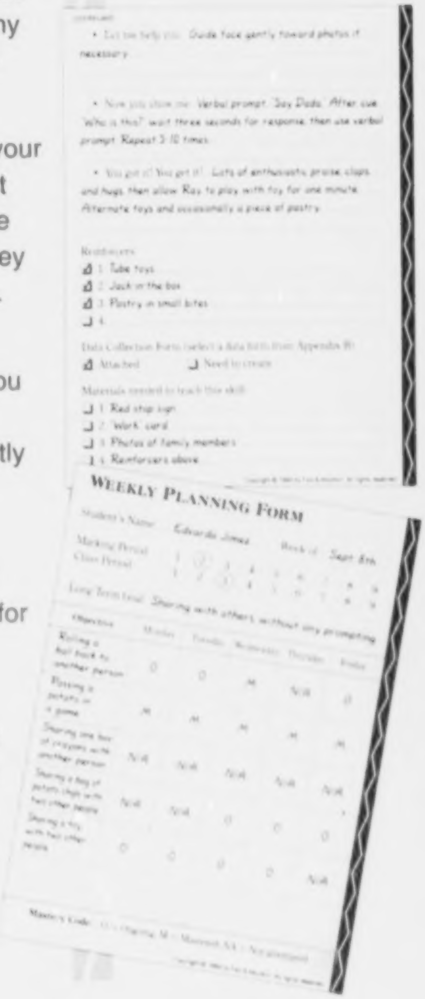
Forms

The Where?: Choosing a Teaching Location

WHERE

Your next teaching decision is to select a work area and create the best possible teaching environment. Of course, all skills should eventually be taught and used in their most appropriate environment. However, many students must begin with a highly structured situation. Here are some good guidelines for selecting a place to teach:

- Choose a quiet place, free from distractions. When you set up your teaching area, keep in mind what distracts your student, not just you. Some students, especially those with autism, should not be seated beside windows or have overhead lights on, because they will focus only on the scene outside the window or on the lights. Others cannot be near a clock if the ticking bothers them.
- Choose a place that is used only for teaching and learning. If you teach where you also eat, your student might spend the whole teaching session looking for food. Using one location consistently reinforces the idea that the teaching area is used just for that, teaching.
- If possible, use a table and chairs. If you and your student are seated in chairs that are pushed up to a table, it is not as easy for him or her to run away, hide, slump down, or ignore you.
- Decide if you want to label your work area. You can use word labels if the student can already read, or you can use a symbol that represents work. This should help communicate the intent of the location and build a set of expectations that are consistent (i.e., going to the teaching table always means "we're going to learn"). There are some students, though, for whom picture or word labels will be too distracting. For example, parents might put a large "NO" symbol on the television set



(continued)

- Let me help you: Guide face gently toward photos if necessary.
- Now you show me: Verbal prompt, "Say Dada." After cue "Who is this?" wait three seconds for response, then use verbal prompt. Repeat 5-10 times.
- You got it! You got it!: Lots of enthusiastic praise, claps, and hugs, then allow Ray to play with toy for one minute. Alternate toys and occasionally a piece of pastry.

Reinforcers:

☑ 1. Tube toys
☑ 2. Jack in the box
☑ 3. Pastry in small bites
☐ 4.

Data Collection Form (select a data form from Appendix B):

☑ Attached ☐ Need to create

Materials needed to teach this skill:

☐ 1. Red stop sign
☐ 2. "Work" card
☐ 3. Photos of family members
☐ 4. Reinforcers above

WEEKLY PLANNING FORM

Student's Name: Edwardo Jones Week of: Sept. 8th

Marking Period: 1 [✓ 2] 3 4
Class Period: 1 2 [✓ 3] 4 5 6 7 8 9

Long Term Goal: Sharing with others without any prompting

Objective	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Rolling a ball back to another person	O	O	M	N/A	O
Passing a potato in a game	M	M	M	M	M
Sharing one box of crayons with another person	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sharing a bag of potato chips with two other people	N/A	N/A	O	O	O
Sharing a toy with two other people	O	O	O	O	N/A

Mastery Code: O = Ongoing, M = Mastered, N/A = Not attempted

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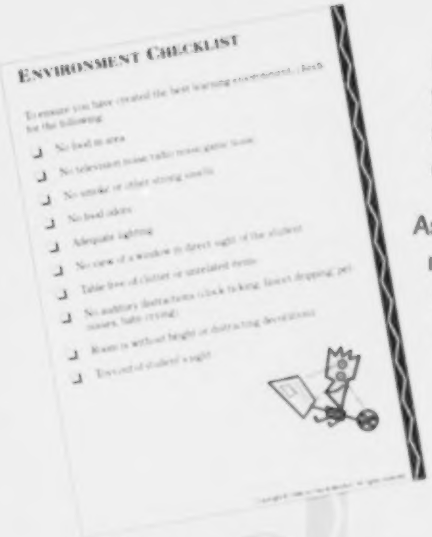


ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

during study time at home. However, if the "NO" symbol itself is a distracting reminder that the television is off limits during work time, it shouldn't be used. Try turning the television around or arranging the chairs so they do not face the television.

As a final check, use the Environment Checklist to be sure that you have not overlooked an important consideration. This checklist will help you make sure that you have considered all the variables necessary to ensure the best possible learning environment. The checklist will apply to both school and home teaching situations. After you have made a decision on where the teaching will take place, fill in the corresponding section of the Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form.

Forms

WHEN

The When?: Deciding When to Teach

Now that you know what you are teaching and where you are going to teach it, figure out the best time to teach—a time when your teaching is most effective.

Homes and classrooms are always busy places. There may only be one or two times during the day that are available for direct instruction. However, if you try to teach when you are busy, preoccupied, distracted, or trying to do two things at once, teaching will be more difficult and learning will take longer. When you are teaching, teach; leave the other activities until later. Establishing routines and sticking to them is important.

Here are some suggestions that may help you decide when to teach:

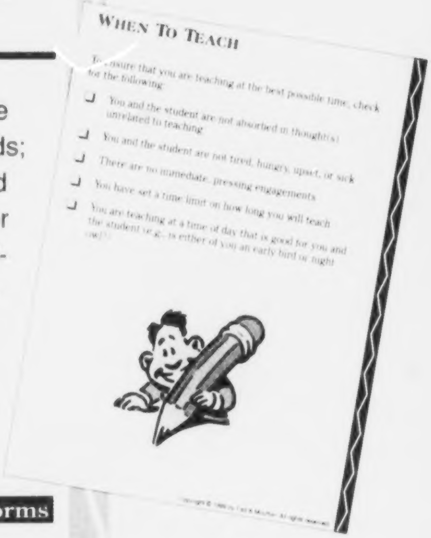
- Don't begin work if you (or the student) are tired, hungry, or upset. You won't get anywhere and you may both end up feeling even more frustrated or upset.
- Make sure that you have plenty of time and that you won't feel rushed. If you are a teacher, build the structured teaching portion of the day into your schedule and make sure that everyone involved has made a firm commitment to it. Also, be clear about what the other students and your assistants are going to be doing while you teach a student in a one-to-one situation.
- Before you begin, set a time limit. For students who are younger than five years old, begin with a 5-, 10-, or 15-minute teaching session. These short sessions can be repeated after a brief rest period. (The rest period can also last about 5-10 minutes, depending on the student's age and prior history with direct teaching.) Eventually, you may want to repeat the teaching sessions throughout the entire day, until the total instructional time is about two hours.

- Increase the length of the sessions as students become able to pay attention longer. When a student is more mature and has a longer attention span, teaching sessions can be increased to about a half hour at a time and can be repeated for a total of several hours per day. Once a student is able to stay actively engaged in learning for more than a half hour, increase instructional time periods gradually. It is also important to increase the amount of time that instruction takes place in the environment in which the skills are needed (e.g., teaching math skills while shopping at the grocery store or teaching essential sight words while taking a walk in the community).
- Try to start early in the day. Most people have more energy in the morning and get progressively more tired as the day goes on. If the student is a morning person and can focus then, teach important skills in the morning. However, if you have time only in the afternoons, evenings, or weekends or if your student gets rejuvenated in the late afternoon or evening, go with what suits everyone's style and schedule.

When the student is in general education settings, it may be difficult for teachers who typically have a large classroom full of students to attend to just one student, so teachers must write a clear schedule that assigns specific duties to assistants at specific times of the day. When teachers are coteaching (special education and general education teachers together in the same classroom), they should plan ahead to arrange the best times for individual or small group instruction. Also, take advantage of spur-of-the-moment opportunities, such as days when many students are absent or involved in other activities, to set up individual direct teaching opportunities.

Possible problems parents might need to anticipate include finding the time in a busy day; making sure they attend to all their children's needs; and having the energy to teach as well as work, maintain a home, and spend some time in leisure. It may help to create a written schedule or calendar that lists each work session and to cross off each session after completing it. You might also want to reward yourself, not just the student, when you complete a certain number of teaching sessions.

Use the When to Teach checklist (see Appendix B) to help you with the process.



WHEN TO TEACH

To ensure that you are teaching at the best possible time, check for the following:

☐ You and the student are not absorbed in thought(s) unrelated to teaching
☐ You and the student are not tired, hungry, upset, or sick
☐ There are no immediate, pressing engagements
☐ You have set a time limit on how long you will teach
☐ You are teaching at a time of day that is good for you and the student (e.g., is either of you an early bird or night owl?)

Once you decide when to teach, write it down on your Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form.

Forms

Now that you know the **What?**, **Where?**, and **When?**, the following chapter will cover the **How?** of structured teaching.

CHAPTER 8

THE HOW? OF STRUCTURED TEACHING

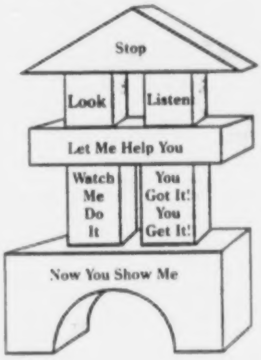
HOW?

There are seven basic teaching steps in this book's structured teaching model. The seven steps can be used to teach any skill or behavior and will be more effective if followed consistently. Regardless of what a student is learning, he or she will need to Stop, Look, and Listen (the first three steps). Most students will also need some modeling of the correct behavior (Watch Me Do It); some cues, guidance, or assistance from you (the Let Me Help You step); a chance to demonstrate the skill by themselves (Now You Show Me); and some positive reinforcement after demonstrating the skill (You Got It! You Get It!).

For students who are very young or who have not mastered the prerequisite skills they need in order to stop, look, and listen, you will want to teach those skills first. Chapters 10 and 11, which both provide the structured approach for teaching some of the most critical skills that prepare students for learning. However, it will help to finish reading this chapter first, so you understand the procedures (the **How?**).

The seven steps in the structured teaching model are:

1. Stop
2. Look
3. Listen
4. Watch Me Do It
5. Let Me Help You
6. Now You Show Me
7. You Got It! You Get It!



Stop

Before you start to teach, it is important to get the student's attention. Often, teachers or parents begin to give directions before a student is attending and listening. When this happens, it often slows down the teaching process. Many students can only focus on one activity at a time, and it is important that the student focus his or her attention on the skill you are teaching, not on distractions in the environment.

There are several ways to let a student know that it's time to stop what he or she is doing and get ready to work. (Some of these were discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.) Pick one primary strategy and one backup that you can use consistently. A verbal direction alone may not always be effective, so pair a nonverbal strategy with a clear verbal direction or cue. For example, while you say "Stop," also use one of these alternative communication styles:

- Show a picture of a clock (this is a symbol of "time to work")
- Use a bell, buzzer, or timer **Kit**
- Show a picture of a stop sign **Kit**
- Use sign language to indicate the word "Stop."

It always helps to have stopping included several times throughout the day, as a normal part of the student's routine. When students know that everything has a stopping point, they may not resist stopping a preferred activity in order to begin the teaching session. Chapters 2 and 3 discussed the use of visual schedules; these schedules are an excellent way to let students know what's going to happen next after they stop one activity.

Keeping students on a consistent, predictable schedule can also reduce resistance and arguments. When students know they are expected to participate in a learning activity on a regular basis, the work session becomes a familiar, expected, and routine part of the day. This helps ease students' transitions from one activity to another. Students learn that even though they might have to stop having fun in order to work, they will also get to stop working in order to have fun. When transitions are not clearly communicated, students who feel more comfortable when their lives are predictable may become anxious and may misbehave. Whether the misbehavior is an attempt to gain control of an unpredictable environment or a method of communicating fear and frustration, it's better to use clearly communicated transitions and avoid as much misbehavior as possible, so combine your visual strategies with your structured teaching approach.

Not only should the student stop to attend to you, it is best if he or she also sits down in the designated work area. Usually, direct instruction will be most effective if both you and the student are seated at a table or other work area. Sitting down signals the beginning of the direct teaching program. Many students will cheerfully cooperate and sit down after they stop doing something else. However, if the student does not sit willingly and consistently (and no, glue is not an option!), check the information in Chapter 10. You may need to teach sitting as a separate skill.

Communicating the direction to sit can be accomplished in several ways. Choose one or more methods that fit your student's communication style. Of course, pairing two styles (e.g., a verbal direction and a hand signal) and using them simultaneously may be a more effective approach, as it combines two different communication modes. Here are some suggested ways to direct a student to sit so you can begin the teaching process:

- Use gestures to communicate the word "Sit"
- Use the one-word verbal direction, "Sit" (of course, you can pair the verbal word and a gesture, using them at the same time)
- Show the "Sit" sign from the Materials Kit **Kit**
- Show a photograph of the student sitting (take a photo ahead of time); or if you can't manage to get a picture of the student sitting, show a picture of someone else sitting at the work table
- Model for the student by sitting down at the work table
- Use a familiar song or an excerpt from a theme song for a television show or movie (if you consistently pair the music with sitting down to work, it will become an effective signal because the student will begin to associate the music with the direction to sit)
- Place a symbol of work on the table (e.g., put a book, notebook, or basket of materials on the table to indicate that it's time to sit and work)

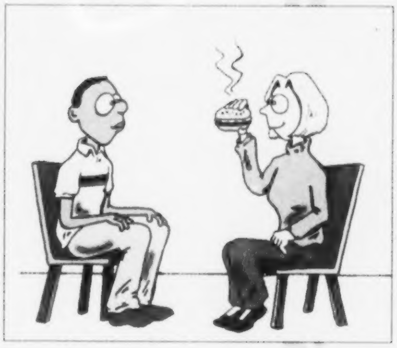
When the student is in general education settings, use something "cool" to remind **all** students when it is time to stop. For example, a theme song from a popular television show or an excerpt from a current rock hit would appeal to all students, whether disabled or not. Also, check at local toy and novelty stores for devices that play sounds that students will find "cool."

Look

After the student sits down, his or her next step is to look at you. Often, people with autism or some other disabilities do not look directly at other people. This makes it difficult to know if they are attending to what is being communicated. Looking at someone during instruction is a critical skill and one that can be very difficult to teach, so this book includes a sequence of direct instruction in Chapter 10 for making eye contact.

Again, choose one (or more) communication modes that fits the student's needs and begin to use it consistently. For example, the direction should include the same sequence of words each time you give it ("Look at me," or just "Look"). Here are some ideas for getting the student's attention and teaching him or her to look at you:

- Clap your hands together once, loudly, and say "Look at me"
- Sound a buzzer or bell **Kit**



- Put a tape player next to you and turn on the student's favorite music
- Use your hands to gently turn the student's head toward you
- Hold a favorite toy or food item up beside your face, near your eyes
- Use a clicker or snapper **Kit**

Immediately after the student looks at you or makes eye contact, praise him or her enthusiastically and use some type of positive reinforcement. (Chapter 6 discussed the hows and whys of using positive reinforcement effectively.) Even if the student only looks at you briefly or makes eye contact for a second, your consistent reinforcement will eventually improve this skill. Celebrate your success and the student's.

If, despite your best efforts with the ideas in this chapter, the student still will not look at you, you must teach looking or making eye contact with a specific teaching sequence, as suggested in Chapter 10. If, after several teaching sessions (20 or more trials for young students and 10-20 trials for older students), the student still will not look at you or make any eye contact, go ahead and begin to teach a new skill anyway. You will know soon enough if his or her attention is focused enough to learn. However, continue to work on the skill of making eye contact at least once or twice each day and reinforce with a very powerful reinforcer.

Listen

Listen

Once the student is seated and looking at you, you can begin your verbal instruction. Remember that some students will never indicate understanding of a verbal direction, nor will these students respond verbally. Nevertheless, verbal directions should always be used in combination with other communication modes, as this is the most commonly used communication mode in everyday life. This is a good time to use the See/Hear Chart, which should help students know exactly what behaviors you are requesting. **Forms**

Next, decide on the exact words that you will consistently use to teach the skill. A consistent choice of words is an important key to learning because it helps make learning occur more quickly and efficiently. In effect, using the same words for the same skill every time helps guarantee that you are teaching only one skill at a time. A consistent choice of words also makes it more likely that the student will know exactly which behavior you are requesting because he or she does not have to discriminate among several directions. If you use a variety of words or you change directions frequently, the student may struggle to learn what each new phrase means. For example, for the skill of making eye contact, you may want the student to learn "Look at me," without having to also learn "Watch," or "Pay attention," or "Please look at Mommy."

After you give the direction to perform a task or demonstrate a new skill, make sure that you check for understanding. Here are some ways to make sure the student understands your instructions:

- If the student is verbal, ask him or her to repeat your direction. ("What did I ask you to do?" "That's right, 'Look at me.'")
- If the student has a reliable "yes/no" response, check for understanding by requiring a head nod, a sign, a gesture, pointing to a sign, pushing on a button, or some other response.
- Again, if the student is verbal, ask him or her to tell you the steps necessary to complete a task in order. If the student is nonverbal, ask him or her to model or show you what he or she is supposed to do.
- Present the student with cards that show the steps in a task and ask him or her to put them in order. If this is too difficult, just ask the student to point to the card that represents the behavior you are expecting.

If the student does not typically respond in one of the ways described in the previous list, you can require at least a "yes" or "no" response to some concrete questions such as:

- "Do I need the _______? Yes or no?"
- "Am I going to do this (as you model the skill)? Yes or no?"
- "Do we need this first (as you point to an object)? Yes or no?"

If the student is completely nonverbal, make sure that you have provided and taught a means of communicating a simple "yes/no" response. (This is addressed in more detail in Chapter 14.)

When teaching students who are ill or who have physical disabilities that limit their movement, make sure you allow adequate time for a response. Sometimes even the most competent teachers fail to allow enough wait time for a response. This can be frustrating for students and may turn them off to the learning process. Try to remain patient, and remember that when you are waiting for something to happen it may seem like forever, but it's not. (Just like those times when you're in a rush at the store: the "express" line seems to take a lifetime, but when you look at your watch, it's only been five minutes.)

Watch
Me
Do
It

Watch Me Do It

Now that you have given instructions in several different communication modes and checked for understanding, the next step is to demonstrate (model) the behavior or skill. When you model a skill, perform the task from the student's perspective. For example, if you are sitting at a table together, move to the student's side so he or she can see exactly how to do the task. Move slowly and deliberately so the steps are clear and obvious. It is even possible, with younger students, to sit or stand behind them and reach around in front of them to perform the task. Use modeling immediately after the Listen step, or simultaneously with a second verbal or visual direction.

For many students, learning new skills is likely to require modeling because verbal or visual directions alone will not be enough. If the student has difficulty attending to a task, modeling is a great way to keep him or her engaged, as students are often more interested in actions than they are in words. Modeling can also prevent you from repeating directions numerous times or cajoling your student into doing something. It is better to use an effective, thorough teaching model than to continually nag.

There are some students who will not need this concrete style of instruction. If students can learn a new skill with verbal instruction and multisensory (usually visual) cues, then modeling may be unnecessary. If modeling is not necessary for some students, do not force them to sit through a boring, frustrating demonstration sequence. These students may be better served if you pay more attention selecting and using a communication mode that matches their style.

When reviewing a skill that you previously taught, you may use a series of photographs depicting each step or you may want to select one specific picture of the student actually performing the final step in a sequence. Photographs are a convenient shortcut that may trigger the student's memory and remind him or her of how to do the task. A photograph may also be effective because it lets the student know how he or she looks when he or she is successful. Picture symbols or any other reminders can work well, too. Match your instructional style to the student's learning style and everyone will be happier!

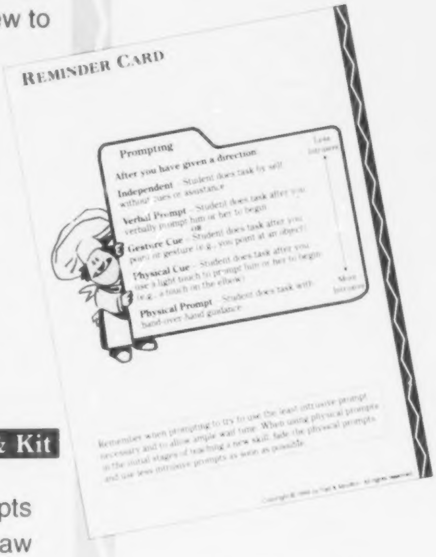
When the student is in general education settings, be sure to present models of completed projects, papers, performances, and other products. Many nondisabled students benefit from this approach as well and it also clarifies expectations for everyone. Save completed products to use as examples!

Let Me Help You

Let Me Help You

Some students may not learn a skill without a prompt of some kind. Although the ultimate goal for students is independent action, prompts are important when teaching students a brand new skill or when raising your criteria (e.g., with successive approximations). Because the skill is new to the student, he or she may not have a clear idea of exactly what is expected of him or her. In effect, prompting "walks students through" the steps of each skill when a verbal prompt alone is not sufficient. There are several different types of prompts, including a verbal prompt (a second spoken direction to begin), a gesture cue (pointing to an object), a physical cue (gently touching the student's elbow to direct him or her to begin), or a more intensive physical prompt (guiding the student's hand by holding it with your hand). To ensure consistency among teachers, staff, and family members, Appendix B includes a master Reminder Card that explains these prompts. A laminated version is also available in the Materials Kit.

Forms & Kit



REMINDER CARD

Prompting

After you have given a direction

Less Intrusive

Independent – Student does task by self without cues or assistance

Verbal Prompt – Student does task after you verbally prompt him or her to begin

OR

Gesture Cue – Student does task after you point or gesture (e.g., you point at an object)

Physical Cue – Student does task after you use a light touch to prompt him or her to begin (e.g., a touch on the elbow)

Physical Prompt – Student does task with hand-over-hand guidance

More Intrusive

Remember when prompting to try to use the least intrusive prompt necessary and to allow ample wait time. When using physical prompts in the initial stages of teaching a new skill, fade the physical prompts and use less intrusive prompts as soon as possible.

In general, it is preferable to use the least intensive or intrusive prompts first, as the goal is for independent action. It may be difficult to withdraw intensive prompting, and too many prompts can rob students of their initiative. There are several important considerations if you use physical prompting with a student:

- Use the least amount of physical assistance possible; you don't want the student to depend on the prompts.
- Be careful not to use prompts in anger or frustration. When you find yourself "making" the student do something that has become a struggle of wills, there is always the chance that you may hurt him or her.
- When using prompts, combine each physical prompt with a picture or symbol. For example, if you are teaching eye contact, make sure that you show a visual representation of the step along with the physical prompt. Eventually you may be able to use only a picture or symbol.

Make sure that you taper off when using prompts. As a general rule, try to use less and less assistance as the student masters a new skill. For example, if you begin teaching a skill with a physical prompt, you might gradually move to a physical cue, then to a gesture, then to a combination picture and verbal cue, then to just a verbal cue, then to a self-initiated independent action. This process is called "prompt fading." Decisions about when and how quickly to fade prompts should involve setting long-term goals and short-term objectives; monitoring progress; revising your plan for teaching; and evaluating when goals and objectives have been met.

(These activities will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.) Fading prompts is a critical aspect of effective teaching. If prompts are not faded, students may become dependent and may lose interest in activities that are no longer challenging. Remember that the long-term goal is for the student to be as independent as possible. Prompts should be viewed as temporary tools.

When using prompts, follow these basic guidelines to help you stay on track and avoid problems:

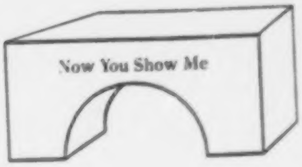
- First, be sure that your prompts are not physically harmful. Prompting is intended as guidance, not physical force or coercion. If the prompting is an unpleasant experience, students may find the entire process aversive and may misbehave in order to avoid the situation.
- Second, keep in mind that when students do not enjoy an activity and/or don't understand how to do it, they may refuse to participate no matter how strong your prompts are. Most people resist participating in activities that they do not like and may wait until prompted to perform a behavior, even when they know how to do it.

For example, if you hate stopping at the gas station and filling up with gas, you may avoid buying gas for your car even though your friend reminds you and the warning light prompts you. You may only stop and buy gas because you have a vision of your car dying on the side of the highway in the middle of the desert. You don't want to be left to die of thirst with no one to talk to but the rattlesnakes and lizards!

Passive resistance to new tasks and nonpreferred activities is understandable. Many students have learned that such resistance is an effective way of avoiding tasks they don't like, because adults often give up or give in before the students do. Remember that there are usually many factors motivating people to behave as they do; prompting may not be the most influential of those factors.

- Third, consider the fact that for some students, especially those with autism or related disorders, close physical contact or touching is highly aversive. For these students, physical prompting is extremely unpleasant. While it may still be necessary as a last resort, other teaching techniques should be tried first.
- Fourth, remember that although some students dislike close physical contact, others enjoy contact and will seek it out. Some students may go out of their way to elicit touches from parents and teachers by feigning helplessness or ignoring directions. If you are having trouble teaching a skill and the student never seems quite able to

initiate action on his or her own, consider limiting or gradually withdrawing your physical prompts.



Now You Show Me

The next step in the structured teaching sequence is to ask the student to demonstrate the skill you have taught. First, however, make sure that you are clear about the level of prompting you will use if the student does not demonstrate the skill independently. Keep in mind that you will probably want to use different types or combinations of prompts for various types of skills. The prompt level will also depend on the student's age, type of disability, past level of prompts used, and the student's level of cognitive functioning. (Remember to hang in there: You may get blisters before you break your boots in!)

To give a direction or make a request for the behavior you are teaching, follow these guidelines:

- First, make direct eye contact and sustain it while you give a direction or request. It is important that the student clearly understand that you are asking him or her to do something and that you expect him or her to do it. Don't be wishy-washy.
- Use a clear, firm voice. However, try not to use a harsh or controlling tone of voice or body language. If you are overly controlling, the student may perform the skill only because he or she is intimidated or threatened. The long-term goal is for the student to build a repertoire of independent behaviors that he or she will demonstrate without relying on external motivations (like coercion, physical intimidation, "the look," or strong gestures).
- Remember to give the direction using the same word or key phrase each time. The more clearly you communicate, the more easily students can understand what you want them to do. Keep your words simple. For example, if you are teaching the skill of stopping when told, just say "Stop." If you want the student to come to you, don't say "I'd really like it if you'd come over here now because I want to talk to you." Instead, say "Come here." (Phrases and directions for specific skills are suggested in Chapters 10-15.)
- Along with your verbal directions, keep using the other (nonverbal) modes of communication you have selected. Use all the modes consistently. If you are using a picture of Elvis to indicate to the student that it's time to comb his or her hair, then don't use Elvis's picture to also represent time to dance or let's walk the dog. Mixing up meanings can be very confusing (like when a teenager says "Bad," and you don't know whether he or she means something is great or terrible).

Remember...

- Direct eye contact
- Act like you expect it to be done
- Clear, firm voice
- Use same key phrase
- Use several modes of communication together
- Do nothing else while teaching

- For parents who are teaching at home, make sure that you are doing one thing and one thing only when teaching. If you watch television, read a magazine, or smoke a cigar along with your teaching, your child may get the impression that the teaching sequence is not important. He or she may also be inclined to resist or evade instructions because you are not attending closely to what is happening.

As previously mentioned, it is important to allow enough wait time after you give a direction, in order to allow students time to process what you have said and then respond. Young students can often respond to a request for a simple, imitative task within 1-5 seconds, but certainly within 20-30 seconds. As your expectations increase and tasks become more challenging, wait time should vary accordingly. For example, if you are teaching a student to imitate a clapping motion, he or she should be able to respond immediately. However, a newer, more complicated skill sequence like spreading butter on bread may take longer. During the time you are waiting for a response, do not repeat the direction, encourage, cajole, or beg. Treat each request as a separate trial for the student on the skill.

Allowing adequate time for a response may also prevent unnecessary prompting. Be patient and allow the student ample time to demonstrate the task before increasing the level of prompting. If you increase your prompts too soon or repeat directions too often, students may lose their initiative and become dependent on your prompts and reminders. Remember, you want to encourage as much independence as possible. If you get in the habit of reminding too often, students can get in the habit of waiting for the reminder before they respond.

As soon as the student demonstrates the requested skill, go to the You Got It! You Get It! step (following). If your student does not demonstrate the skill you're teaching, repeat the Let Me Help You step.

You
Got It!
You
Get It!

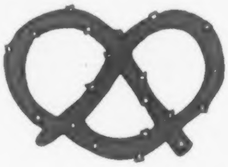
You Got It! You Get It!

Reward and reinforce a student each time he or she correctly demonstrates the skill you are teaching. This part of the teaching sequence is the most fun and is probably the most important part of teaching. One of the most effective ways to teach and maintain a behavior is to present positive reinforcement immediately after the occurrence of the behavior. Chapter 6 explained that positive reinforcement is a consequence that increases the specific behavior that it follows. So, the best way to make sure that students master and use the skills that you have taken the time to teach is to reinforce them often and with great enthusiasm.

Keep in mind that positive reinforcers are effective only when the student finds them desirable. Like most things in life, positive reinforcers vary and depend on each person's individual preferences. For example, you may have to have your java in the morning and will do anything to get it. Your friend, on the other hand, doesn't drink coffee, hates the smell, and wouldn't be motivated by a cup of coffee as a reward. There are several ways that you can determine which reinforcers are the most powerful for an individual student. (These were described in more detail in Chapter 6.) Examples of reinforcers include:

- A "high five"
- Smiling
- A check mark on the student's paper
- A piece of cereal
- A walk with the dog
- Looking at a picture
- Listening to music
- A sip of juice
- Going out for lunch
- Calling a friend
- Looking at a magazine

If you are going to use food as a reinforcer, especially small pieces like cereal or pretzels, put them into small plastic zipper bags (these are available in most grocery stores). Because the bags are clear and students can see the goodies inside, they will begin to associate the bags with the teaching process. Using the goodie bags will also keep you organized and keep the students focused. Have several different reinforcers readily available so that when one food item is no longer appealing, you will have new choices available.



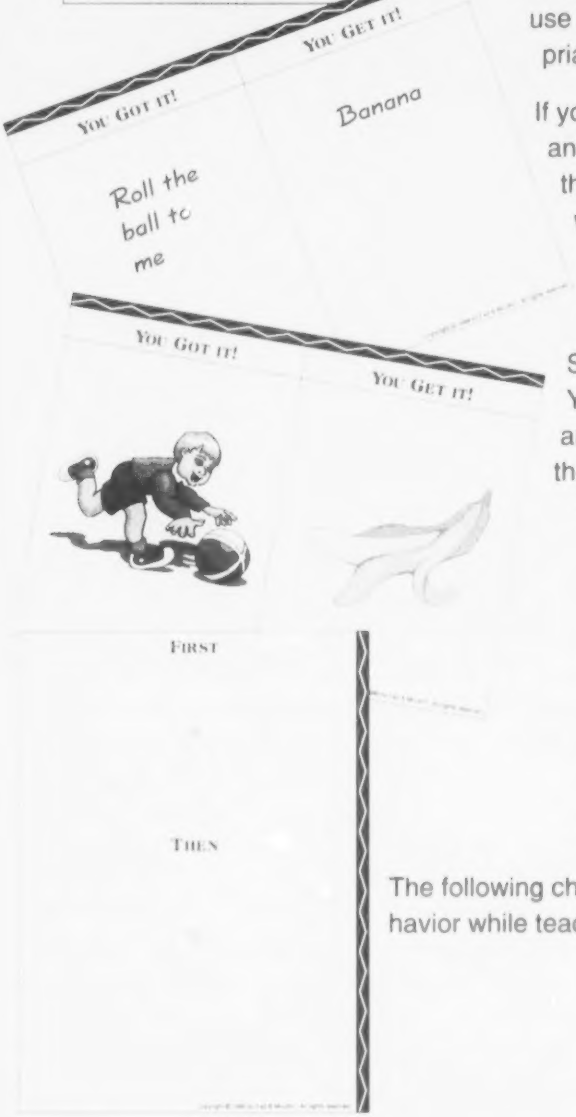
Here are some important guidelines to use when you respond to a student's demonstration of a skill:

- Get excited and be enthusiastic! This is especially important with young students and with any students whose communication skills are limited. Use lots of praise, big smiles, and laughter. These are contagious.
- Use a descriptive phrase to tell the student specifically what he or she did correctly. For example, when praising eye contact, use a phrase such as "Thanks for looking!" or "Great job looking at me!" instead of an ambiguous statement like "Good job." Also, describe actions, not traits. For example, instead of saying "You're a good

girl," say "Great job setting the table!" Keep your phrases short and concise.

- When you are teaching a new skill, reinforce it every time. Later, after the student has demonstrated the skill correctly over time, you can use the reinforcers less frequently. However, it's always a good idea to continue using verbal praise so the student knows he or she is on the right track. We all need praise, even when the initial excitement of a new skill has worn off.
- Parents can use lots of touching and closeness if they know their child responds well to this type of reinforcement. Even children who shy away from touches at first may eventually begin to respond when enthusiasm, smiles, and praise are part of the package. Almost everybody enjoys hugs, pats on the back, head rubs, high fives, tickles, and arm rubs. Don't forget to pair the touching with praise or compliments. (Teachers should use their own judgment in deciding whether touch is appropriate in a given situation or with a given student.)

If you are going to use rewards other than praise, smiles, and hugs, it is important to communicate ahead of time with the student so the student knows exactly what he or she is working for. One way to do this is to use the You Got It! You Get It! form or the First/Then form. These forms are visual contracts that let a student know what to do, when he or she has "got it," and what he or she will get. Some examples are shown here for the skill of sitting. You can use symbols, photographs, drawings, words, or any combination of these to fill in the forms for the student. **Forms**



You Got It!

Roll the ball to me

You Get It!

Banana

You Got It!

You Get It!

First

Then

When the student is in general education settings, teachers can use the You Got It! You Get It! form but use all the students as models for the pictures that demonstrate skill mastery. This approach should help a student with a disability feel less different and more "included" in the group. Teachers can use all students in the class for photographs that are attached to the form, so that everyone gets to be a "model."

The following chapter will discuss monitoring and recording students' behavior while teaching, so that you and your students stay on track.

CHAPTER 9

KEEPING TRACK: MONITORING AND RECORDING

Success generally comes in small steps at a slow pace. For example, when relatives or friends who live far away visit you, they may be shocked at how much your children have grown and changed since the last time they saw your children. You, on the other hand, probably hadn't noticed how dramatic the changes were until pointed out to you.

The same is true of behavioral change: Without close monitoring of progress, one might fail to appreciate how much a student really is learning. It is important to monitor and record behavior over time so you can keep track of long-term progress that you might not notice on a day-to-day basis. Keeping charts, graphs, or other records can help everyone involved figure out what is going right and what should be adjusted.

TASK PROGRESS FORM

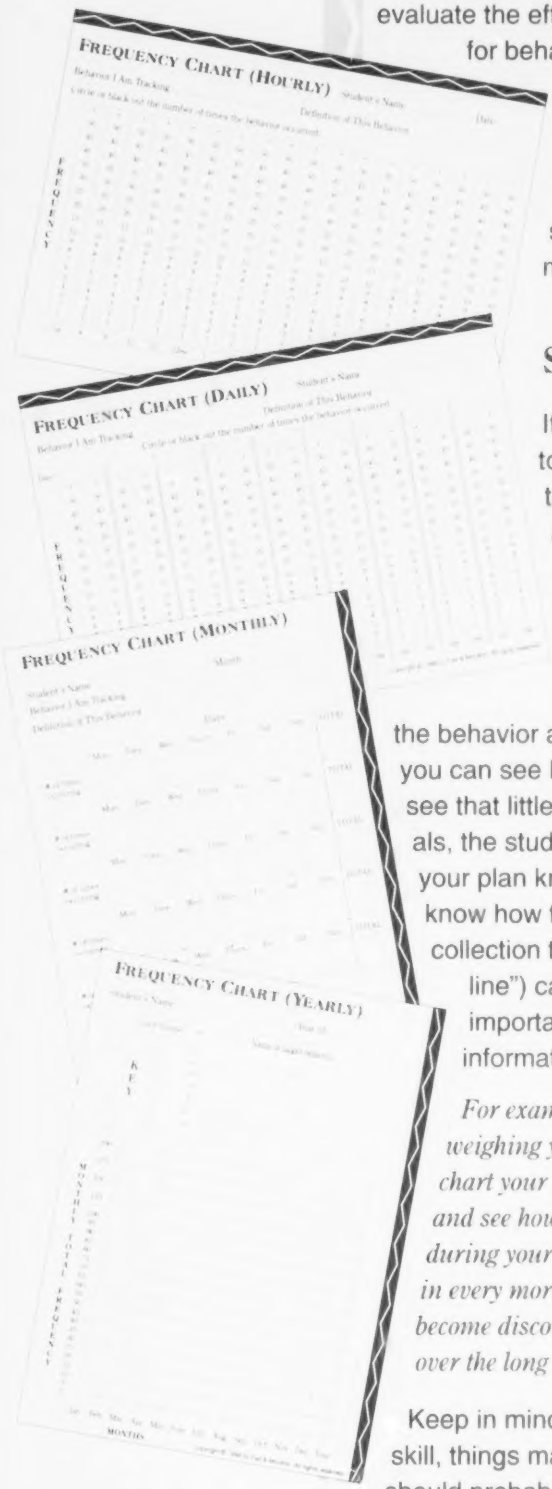
TASK PROGRESS FORM

Changes that occur in a teaching situation may not always be apparent to you as the teacher, because teaching and observing are difficult to do at the same time. It may sometimes seem to be a lot of trouble to keep records of what you do, but it is the best way to evaluate your students' progress and your own teaching strategies. To help you maintain objectivity, solicit input from as many sources as possible, including your friends; other teachers; parents; family members; neighbors; the students' friends in school and the community; and professionals who know specific students.

Eventually, many students can learn to monitor and record their own progress, which is a wonderful way for them to increase their skills in self-evaluation and self-control. For now, however, this book begins with the assumption that a teacher, teaching assistant, parent, or other adult will be recording and monitoring behavior. For your convenience, Appendix B includes several behavior monitoring forms that you can use to record your students' progress. Each one is a simple monitoring tool for use with an individual skill. (Samples of these are shown on this page and the following page.

Forms

The process of monitoring and recording does not have to be complicated and time-consuming. It is not necessary to follow your students around with a clipboard, writing down everything they say and do. When teaching a new skill, record each trial so you can easily measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching. For more established skills or for behaviors that only need to be demonstrated occasionally, less frequent data recording (e.g., every tenth trial, one hour per day, three days per week) will do the job. Make sure that you keep some kind of record of the data, though, especially while teaching a new behavior. That way if, after several trials, you see no improvement, you'll know you may need to reevaluate and revise your teaching strategy.


FREQUENCY CHART (HOURLY)
Behavior I Am Tracking
Student's Name
Definition of This Behavior
Date
FREQUENCY
FREQUENCY CHART (DAILY)
Student's Name
Behavior I Am Tracking
Definition of This Behavior
FREQUENCY
FREQUENCY CHART (MONTHLY)
Month
Student's Name
Behavior I Am Tracking
Definition of This Behavior
TOTAL
FREQUENCY CHART (YEARLY)
Student's Name
KEY
MONTHS

Start at the Beginning

If you are going to teach a new skill, it is important to begin to monitor and record the behavior **before** beginning the teaching intervention. In fact, you should observe, monitor, and keep track of the behavior before you even begin to develop your teaching strategy.

If you are teaching a brand new skill to a student, of course it is impossible to observe, as it hasn't happened yet. In this case, you might direct the student to perform the behavior and then you can record the lack of response. This way you can see later how many teaching trials you completed and you can see that little or no response was forthcoming. If, after two or three trials, the student still cannot perform the behavior, then you can design your plan knowing exactly where you need to start. If the student does know how to perform some of the steps involved, then the initial data collection that occurs before you begin teaching (called the "baseline") can help you avoid unnecessary teaching steps. It is both important and fun to do baseline observations and record the information.

For example, if you were to set out to lose weight, you'd begin by weighing yourself to ascertain your starting point. You could also chart your weight on graph paper each week, so that you can look back and see how far you've come when you need a little encouragement during your sixth week of a dieting nightmare. If you just keep weighing in every morning but have no visual record of your progress, you may become discouraged and forget that you actually have made some progress over the long haul.

Keep in mind that whenever a student is very resistant to learning a skill, things may get worse before they get better. In this situation, you should probably continue the intervention and give it a chance to work. If

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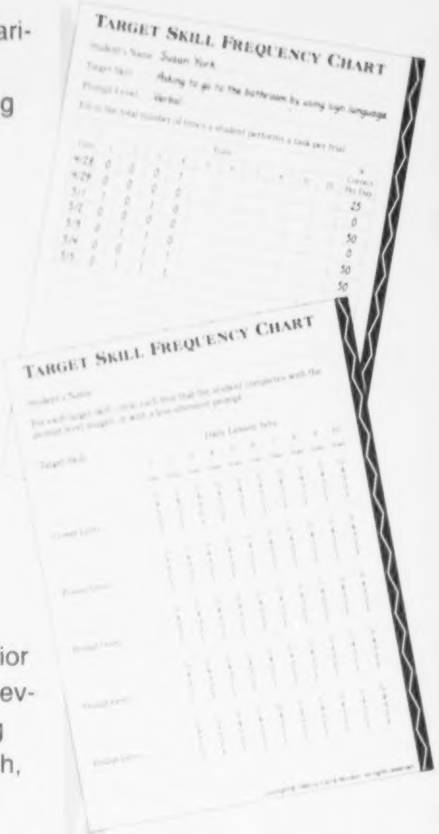
necessary, review your ABC ➻ P model to determine whether other variables might be impacting the student's behavior. Initial resistance to learning a new behavior is not unusual and is often short-lived, so hang in there!


TARGET SKILL FREQUENCY CHART

Susan York

Asking to go to the bathroom by using sign language

Verbal

TARGET SKILL FREQUENCY CHART

When the student is in general education settings, make sure that whatever methods and tools being used are quick, easy, and convenient. Otherwise general education teachers, who often teach large numbers of students each day (especially secondary teachers), may not use the recording forms and you may be left without any data with which to measure progress. Keep in mind that once teachers are in the habit of monitoring and recording, they often begin to use the tools for other students who have common misbehaviors like talking out and getting out of their seats.

Methods for Observing and Recording

The recording method you use will depend on the nature of the behavior as well as your purpose. When measuring behavior, you can look at several dimensions, including frequency, duration, and intensity. Deciding which dimension to measure depends on what you hope to accomplish, as well as on the impact of the behavior. Behaviors that occur often should probably be recorded each time they occur (counting the frequency). Less frequent but more intense or time-consuming behaviors can be timed (duration) or observed for characteristics like intensity of activity.

> *If, for example, Zachary's tantrums have worn you out, your first monitoring method might be counting the number (frequency) of tantrums he throws each hour. When your first intervention succeeds in reducing his tantrums from five times per hour to only once per hour, you may then shift your focus to the duration of each tantrum. If you continue to be successful and Zachary's tantrum now lasts five minutes instead of 45 minutes, you may want to shift your focus again: Even though Zach tantrums only once and the tantrum lasts only five minutes, if he still throws furniture, smears feces, and bites others, then your next intervention may focus on reducing the intensity of his tantrum. Eventually, you may decide you can live with it if he tantrums only once per hour for five minutes and the tantrum consists only of crying and pouting.*

You should also consider what method is practical and least intrusive in each environment. For example, if you are job coaching a 20-year old student in her workplace, whipping out a clipboard with a data form attached may yield accurate information but it might attract attention and be a source of embarrassment for the student. A better strategy might be to

Simple Ways to Record Data

- Slashes on paper or on a piece of tape on arm
- A hidden recording form
- Shifting objects from one location to another
- Using a grocery counter
- Using a stopwatch
- Video or audio recordings
- Random work samples
- Anecdotal journals

use a golf counter (a little metal clicker that you hold in your pocket). In addition to the forms provided in Appendix B, the following list offers some other simple ways to collect information:

- Drawing slashes on a piece of masking tape attached to your sleeve or arm
- Placing a recording sheet inside a magazine
- Shifting small objects (e.g., paper clips or pennies) from one pocket to another
- Using a calculator
- Using a stopwatch that you wear around your neck **Kit**
- Sample video or audiotaping with either a hidden camera or audiotape player that runs constantly and becomes a "fixture" in the room
- Collecting random work samples
- Writing an anecdotal account or journal entry

Another consideration in selecting your observation and recording method is the effect that observation has on behavior. In many cases, observation alone impacts behavior. When people know that someone is watching them, their behavior often improves. On the other hand, a student may become angry or agitated if that student knows that someone is watching him or her. In this case, you may want to select an observation method that is unobtrusive. Even students who seem unaware of what is going on in their environment or whose level of functioning seems very low may still be sensitive to others' interactions with them. You might not think that your student understands what you are saying and doing, but your actions could impact his or her behavior, so be sneaky and keep it under your hat (or blotter or book or jacket or whatever . . . you get the idea!).

How Long Should You Monitor and Record?

Unfortunately, there is no easy formula for deciding how long to monitor and record a behavior; there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Deciding how long to monitor a behavior depends on several things, including the severity of the behavior, the age of the student, the student's level of knowledge and understanding, and the value you place on the behavior. Here are some considerations that may help you when you aren't sure whether you have observed and recorded long enough or often enough:

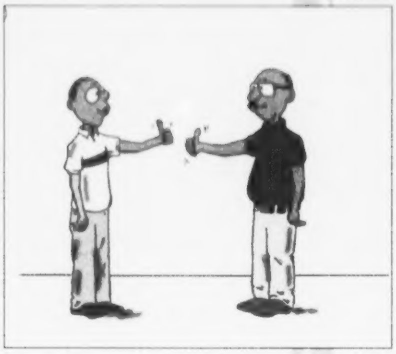
- Even after a student's behavior begins to increase (or decrease) as you had planned, keep monitoring and recording. You want to make sure that the improvements are going to last, so continue monitoring for at least two weeks past the mastery point to be confident the student is going to maintain the skill.

- It's all too easy for both parents and teachers to lose their focus and become inconsistent with monitoring, then lose track of the student's progress, then become less consistent with the teaching approach, and then proclaim, "This intervention doesn't work," and give up. Maintaining **your** consistency (not the student's) will be easier if you maintain an overall system, including a schedule for teaching and for reinforcement.
- If you keep your monitoring and recording system simple, it will be easier to stick with your program. For parents, especially, finding time to monitor and record behavior can be difficult in today's busy world. Find an easy, quick, and practical method that works for you (such as choosing one day each week or one specific half-hour interval each day during which to observe).
- In addition to consistency in your teaching approach, consistency in your delivery of positive reinforcement can be easier if you monitor and record systematically. You may even want to record your use of positive reinforcement at the same time that you record the student's behavior.

When the student is in general education settings, it is important for adults to be consistent. Adults often use positive reinforcement very frequently as they begin to teach a new skill but then forget to keep it up after a while. A good system to ensure that adults reinforce consistently is to require a certain number of reinforcement statements per hour or per class period. For example, if Ms. Salazar gets five reinforcement tokens that she has to dispense during each class period, she will remember to reinforce her students. Another strategy is for students to record how often they receive reinforcement. This allows for self-evaluation as well as for providing feedback to the teacher.

Evaluating Your Data

Don't record information just for the sake of compiling data. The purpose of monitoring and recording behavior is to get information that will tell you if your lesson plan is working and how much your students are learning. Because you are recording information before, during, and after teaching a behavior, you can perform continuous, ongoing evaluation. It is possible to evaluate a student's progress quickly, especially if you convert the data to a visual representation like a graph. Data can be reviewed daily and, if you are ambitious and have the time, you can compute monthly totals and transfer the information to a bar graph for the year. Regardless of how often you evaluate your data, without it you may get a feeling about how a student is progressing, but you really will not know for sure.



Make sure that you stop and celebrate your students' success in learning and your success in teaching. Although you never want learning to stop, it is important to stop and appreciate your accomplishments before moving on to the next goal. If you do not pat your student (and yourself) on the back after reaching a goal, you both may become discouraged. Congratulate yourselves for meeting a difficult challenge and not giving up!

The following chapters will explain how to teach specific skills in a format that links multisensory communication strategies, practical behavior management techniques, and a structured direct teaching model.

TEACHING THE SKILLS

So far, we have provided information about how to use a structured teaching model along with some creative multisensory communication approaches. Having read the information so far should prepare you to begin to teach specific skills to your students. Obviously, it would be impossible (and very boring for you) for this book to provide a specific teaching plan for every skill that a particular student might need to learn. On the other hand, no doubt there are teachers and parents who will appreciate specific applications and examples of teaching principles. So this section of the book provides what will (we hope) be a useful, but not too detailed, series of chapters containing plans for teaching some basic but key skills.

The following chapters will present skills for getting ready to learn. These skills are very concrete and are basic prerequisites that students must master if they are to productively participate in further instruction.

Chapter 10 presents one complete plan for the first skill, Making Eye Contact. As the format for teaching that first skill is very similar to the format for the other two skills in that chapter (Sitting in a Chair and Quiet Voice and Hands), the plans include only special considerations and practical tips for these other two skills.

This same approach is taken in Chapters 11-14 as well: The plan for one skill is presented in more depth, then the other two skills in each chapter are addressed by offering tips, things to consider, and variations in the teaching strategy. The skills in the following chapters are:

Chapter 10: Skills That Prepare Students for Learning

- Making Eye Contact
- Sitting in a Chair
- Quiet Voice and Hands

Chapter 11: Cooperation Skills

- Following Simple Directions
- Stopping When Told
- Waiting to Begin

Chapter 12: Learning by Imitating and Matching

- Taking Turns
- Imitating Motor Movements

- Matching Objects

Chapter 13: *Independent Learning Skills*

- Working Independently and Following a Schedule
- Initiating
- Helping Others

Chapter 14: Basic Communication Skills

- Eliciting Sounds
- Communicating "Yes" and "No"
- Making a Choice

Chapter 15 focuses on strategies for higher-level language skills. The suggestions in Chapter 15 are not in the same format as the other skill chapters, because Chapter 15 involves higher-level skills. However, they are included in Part II of the book because they do include many direct instruction techniques.

These six skill chapters in Part II will provide assistance as you apply the principles that were discussed in Part I of the book.

CHAPTER 10

SKILLS THAT PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LEARNING

If students are to learn in the most efficient and effective ways possible in school, they must demonstrate some prerequisite skills. These prerequisites are essential for academic and social learning. This chapter will discuss skills that help get students ready to learn. While there are many skills that would fall into this category, in the interest of simplicity this chapter focuses on three fundamental skills:

A. Making Eye Contact

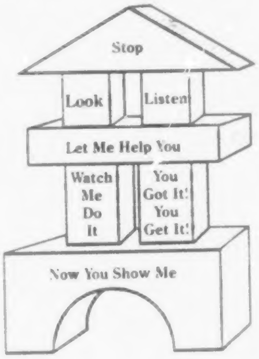
B. Sitting in a Chair

C. Quiet Voice and Hands

This chapter will explain Making Eye Contact as an example of how to teach this group of skills. To avoid repetition and redundancy, the teaching strategy will only be presented for this one skill; the same principles can be generalized for teaching Sitting in a Chair and Quiet Voice and Hands. The structured teaching sequence includes some specific suggestions regarding what to do and say as well as additional advice based on our practical experiences (we're two old salty dogs, you know).

When you teach students with learning or communication difficulties, it is best to keep your direct teaching simple and straightforward. When teaching each skill, you should follow the structured teaching steps that were explained in detail in Chapters 7, 8, and 9. The steps are:

- Stop
- Look
- Listen
- Watch Me Do It
- Let Me Help You
- Now You Show Me
- You Got It! You Get It!



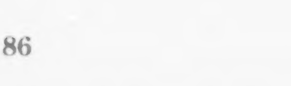
Be sure to read the entire teaching sequence, following, before you begin, so that you understand what to do and how to do it.

Skill 10-A Making Eye Contact

Chapter 10, Skill A (10-A): Making Eye Contact

Before you begin:

1. Review the information in Chapter 7 and decide what, where, and when you are going to teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.
2. Photocopy the Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form from Appendix B. **Forms**
3. Select and locate a data collection form to use for monitoring. Several are provided in Appendix B, or you may create your own. **Forms**
4. Gather other necessary materials, including:
   - Positive reinforcers such as small food items in plastic bags; small toys; or a tape recorder/CD player with music
   - A toy or other small item that the student finds especially interesting or appealing (or possibly a food he or she really likes)
   - A timer or stopwatch **Kit**
5. Create a sign or poster using the You Got It! You Get It! form: It should show a symbol for eye contact on the left side of the page and the reinforcer you intend to use on the right side. The symbol for Making Eye Contact could be something as simple as a picture of two open eyes. Make sure the picture symbol is large and clear enough to communicate your intent. A photograph, product wrapper or other container, or symbol can represent the reward. **Forms**
6. Decide how long teaching sessions will last or how many repetitions of the teaching sequence you will use during each lesson. Try to stick to your plan, so that you will neither persist with an unproductive lesson nor give up too soon. (Your first teaching session should probably be limited to ten repetitions of the teaching sequence or ten minutes.) Next, set the timer or stopwatch before you begin teaching. Remember, you can repeat the teaching sequence as often as you like; just be sure you and the student take a break between sessions.



Step 1: Stop

The first step is to indicate to the student that it is time to stop what he or she is doing and begin the first step in the teaching sequence. In order to reinforce the idea that it is time to begin working, remember to have your work area set up and ready to go. For this particular skill, it is probably best if you sit across from the student. If you have a small table or desk, arrange the chairs facing each other; otherwise, sit directly facing each other without a desk, close enough for you to touch the student. If you are having trouble getting the student to stay seated, use a chair with arms and push it tightly under the table, or back the student's chair into a corner and sit facing him or her. Parents should be sure that they have removed all distracting items from the work area, especially if the space is also used for other activities (e.g., if you're using the kitchen table).

Step 2: Look

As the skill you are explaining is making eye contact (an essential in the Look step), this discussion will move to the next step. Once a student learns to make eye contact, getting him or her to look should be easy. To cue the student to the skill he or she is going to learn, begin by showing the student the You Got It! You Get It! form you made for this step.

Forms

Step 3: Listen

Chapter 8 suggested that you hold an appealing item like food or a small, colorful toy beside your face to prompt eye contact. For example, if the student loves bananas, you could cut a small piece of banana and use it for this step. Each time you give the direction begin the sequence with a **consistently used** cue word such as "Ready?" So, your teaching sequence might look and sound something like this:

- While holding up the eye contact symbol, say something simple like, "Mike, we're going to learn 'Look at me.' Ready?"
- Then, hold the eye-catching toy or food item (something visible and extremely enticing) out so that the student can see it.
- Once the student is looking at the eye-catching item, slowly move it toward your face. Bring it up to the side of your face, beside one eye. At the same time, say, "Mike, look at me," or "Mike, look."

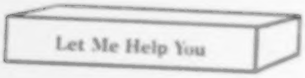
Step 4: Watch Me Do It

At the same time that you say, "Look at me," follow any or all of these steps:

- Model the skill by making sustained eye contact with the student.
- Exaggerate the eye contact by opening your eyes wide or putting your head forward, both of which are excellent cues.
- Put your face very close to that of the student (within six inches) and look directly into his or her eyes.

Using these modeling strategies to demonstrate Making Eye Contact shows the student exactly what to do and what is expected.

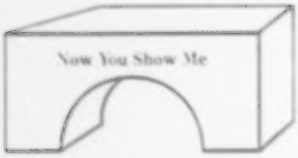
If the student makes eye contact within two seconds, move immediately to the Now You Show Me and You Got It! You Get It! steps. But if you have followed the first four steps and the student has not made eye contact within two seconds and/or not sustained it for at least one full second (count to yourself "one one thousand" to check this), then you will need to prompt him or her. Prompting will be discussed in the following step, Let Me Help You.



Step 5: Let Me Help You

To provide guidance for making eye contact, follow this prompting sequence:

- First, use your hand to **gently** turn the student's head toward you. Do this as you give the "Look at me" verbal direction.
- Repeat this prompt each time you give the direction and the student does not make eye contact. Once he or she does make eye contact, stop using the physical prompt and just use the verbal direction. As you work, record each trial attempted and what the student's response was.
- Don't forget to stop working after ten minutes or ten trials (or whatever limit you have previously set) even if the student has not yet made eye contact. You do not want to set up a frustrating or confrontational situation.



Step 6: Now You Show Me

Eventually, you will expect the student to make eye contact immediately, every time that you give him or her the direction, "Look at me." Although there is no hard and fast rule for deciding when a student has mastered this skill, here are some mastery criteria you might want to use. You can assume that the student has mastered this skill when he or she makes eye contact within one to five seconds of your direction without a physical prompt, **and** he or she sustains the eye contact for at least two seconds.

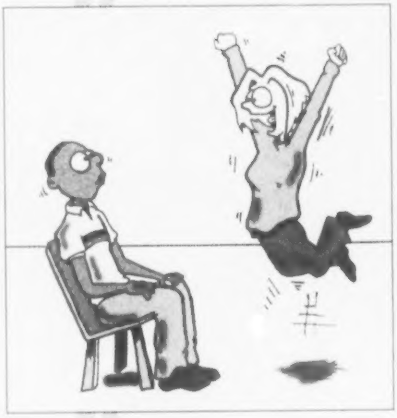
To ensure consistency, the student should also make eye contact nine out of ten times per work session each day for ten consecutive days.

Once the student meets these mastery criteria for Making Eye Contact, move to the You Got It! You Get It! step.

You Got It! You Get It!

Step 7: You Got It! You Get It!

If you have made it to this step, congratulations to both you and the student! Way to go! As a review for this step, you might want to read the corresponding section in Chapter 8 again. Here are some ways to maximize the positive reinforcement you use:



- After you have said “Look at me” and the student makes eye contact, immediately and enthusiastically shower him or her with tons of verbal praise (“Great job looking at me!” or “Good looking! Super job!” or “Give me five for looking at me!”). When praising, always be sure to tell the student exactly what he or she did correctly.
- Along with the verbal praise, use plenty of happy faces, claps, big smiles, and major excitement! Hugging, rubbing the student’s belly, patting the student on the back, and affectionately mussing up the student’s hair are all wonderful ways to praise students as long as these actions are age appropriate and welcomed.
- You may also want to point to the reward section of the You Got It! You Get It! form that you prepared, indicating the relationship between the behavior and the positive reinforcement.
- Finally, along with the verbal praise and pats on the back, it is now time to deliver the reward that you promised. Whatever the reward, present it immediately, while you are describing the behavior that the student performed correctly (in this case, Making Eye Contact).

When teaching a new skill, make sure that you reinforce each and every time the student demonstrates the desired skill. Once the student has learned the behavior (met the conditions and criteria) it may not be necessary to project the same level of enthusiasm; you can tone it down a bit. Remember, though, if you do not appreciate what someone does, he or she may stop doing it!

It is important that after the student has met your conditions and criteria in the structured teaching situation at home or school, you begin to require him or her to make eye contact in everyday situations. Only when the student makes eye contact in all environments, at different times, and with many different people will you know that he or she has truly mastered this skill. This means that you must remember to give the direction “Look at me” frequently. Also, make sure that other adults who interact with the student use the same phrase and set the same criteria. This will help students generalize their learning more quickly. (Generalization and transfer will be covered in greater detail in Chapter 16.)

The other two skills this chapter will address are Sitting in a Chair and Quiet Voice and Hands.

Because teaching these two skills will involve similar steps to the ones for Making Eye Contact, this chapter will not detail each step, but will instead share some practical suggestions that might make your teaching more successful. The student should be able to learn each skill a little more easily than the last. Use the Lesson Planning Form for each skill; the form provides a checklist of the seven structured teaching steps. **Forms**

Skill 10-B
Sitting in a Chair

Chapter 10, Skill B (10-B): Sitting in a Chair

Before you begin:

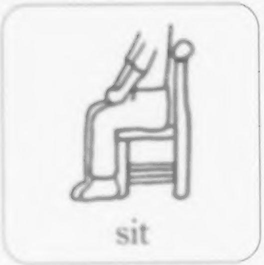
1. Read all the teaching information (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form. **Forms**
3. Consider when and why you are going to teach students to sit. When students are in school, not all skills must be taught while sitting; however, there are many lessons involving tasks that are almost impossible to complete without sitting in a chair at a table or desk. Individuals who are very young or have a predisposition to hyperactivity and impulsivity may find it very difficult to sit and attend for long periods of time, so teaching them to sit is essential for their success. It is important, too, that students learn to sit independently without physical restraints and/or constant verbal reminders, as teachers and parents often grow weary when students lack self-control.

TIPS

Use these tips when teaching students to sit in a chair or at a table:

- Use a whoopee cushion. Some students love to hear the noise this makes and will want to sit because it's fun! (However, use this for instruction only and fade this one out before you take the student to a public setting!)
- Don't forget to choose a strong reinforcer for this skill, since many students resist sitting down at a table. (Think of it from the "What's in it for me?" standpoint, as a student might do.)
- Make the student's chair attractive, inviting, or special. For example, a director's chair with the student's name or a bright sticker on it might help motivate the student.
- If the student never sits still or if you have already encountered big problems getting the student to sit without your holding him or her in the chair, begin to teach this skill in very small increments. Your first goal might be to teach him or her to sit for only five to ten seconds. The next step might be to ask for thirty seconds or one minute. Five minutes of sitting may seem like an eternity at this point, but just remember, you have to begin somewhere and **some** sitting is better than **no** sitting.

- Don't resort to straps or other restraints if what you want to teach is sitting to work without constant monitoring. If you use restraints, the student will not be learning the skill of sitting when you ask.
- Structure the seating area to make remaining seated more likely. For example, you can push the student's chair all the way up to the table or seat the student against the wall so it is more difficult for him or her to push away or squirm out of the space.
- Consider using a carrel or other partially enclosed environment which should minimize opportunities to leave the area.
- Make sure that you have communicated your wishes by using pictures and symbols that represent the student sitting, as well as pictures of the positive reinforcers offered. If you have ever seen the student sitting, keep a camera handy, so you can take a photograph and use it on the You Got It! You Get It! form.
- If it is absolutely essential that the student learn to sit and you have exhausted every strategy you know over a considerable period of time, consider whether you think it is necessary to use a gentle physical prompt. Placing your hands on the student's shoulders, putting your arm across his or her lap, or sitting directly in front of the student (knee to knee) and placing your palms on his or her knees are all options. If there are two adults teaching, one person could stand close behind the student so that he or she is less likely to stand up and leave the area.
- When you first teach sitting, reinforce every time the student sits when directed to, even if a prompt is used. (Later, you will reinforce only if the student sits without a prompt.)
- If you feel yourself becoming angry or frustrated, stop. Take a break and come back later.



Chapter 10, Skill C (10-C): Quiet Voice and Hands

Skill 10-C
Quiet Voice and Hands

Before you begin:

1. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form. **Forms**
2. Consider when and why you are going to teach students to stay quiet. Although most everyone loves to hear children talk and laugh, there are times when quiet is best. Any classroom teacher knows that students usually learn more if they are listening to instruction, and part of good listening for most students is staying quiet and keeping their hands still so they are not distracted.

TIPS

Here are some practical tips that should help you as you teach your student to keep his or her voice quiet and hands still:

- Always teach an alternative or replacement behavior. For example, if you want your student to keep his or her hands quiet and still, you could teach the student to sit on them, put them in his or her pockets, place them on a designated area ("the magic learning hands") on the table, or hold something. If you elect to have the student hold something so that the student doesn't make noises with his or her fingers, make sure that the student cannot use the new object he or she is holding to make another noise (no clickers, please).
- Consider using hand movement as a planned activity ("Move your hands like this as fast as you can"). Then switch to quiet hands for a period of time. This may help your student learn to differentiate the two and it may also let the student know that he or she doesn't have to keep his or her hands quiet **all** of the time ("butterfly hands" now and "snail hands" later).
- If a student really, really, really loves to self-stimulate, flap, or play with his or her hands in ritualistic ways, you may want to use these actions as positive reinforcers. For example, set up a contract so that if the student has quiet hands for ten minutes, then he or she can have busy hands for two minutes. Use a timer or stopwatch to make sure that you don't lose track of the time. **Kit**
- Clearly define what you mean by quiet voice and hands. You might want to play an audiocassette of the student talking or making noise first, then a blank audiocassette as an example of quiet.
- Include visual signs or signals that indicate time for quiet or time for noise. The visual signs can be integrated into a reinforcement schedule that allows for noise and movement as a reward.
- When students have communication difficulties and use noise and vocalizations instead of speech, include hand signals and gestures when indicating that it is time to sit quietly. A simple "shhh" sign (finger to your lips) is universally used and easily understood. You can also use concrete examples, such as a mitten symbol or glove picture during quiet time.
- Try planned ignoring if the circumstances are right. Ignoring unwanted noise and rewarding a quiet voice may teach the skill more quickly than just using positive reinforcement alone. Be careful, though, when you use ignoring as a behavior change strategy. If you ignore for a short time but eventually pay attention when the noise gets loud or intense, you have just taught the student to get louder and more intense in order to get your attention. (This is called "creating a monster.") If you are going to ignore, you must

ignore consistently and for a considerable amount of time; otherwise, do not use this approach.

- It is never acceptable to use physical interventions to prevent talking. No duct tape, hands over the student's mouth, straitjackets, or cloth stuffed in the mouth! These interventions are neither ethical nor humane.
- Remember to use the most powerful reinforcers you have to teach these prerequisite skills. Use the positive reinforcers consistently and make sure that you tell the student exactly why he or she is getting the reinforcer. ("You are so good at being quiet. You didn't talk for two minutes and you deserve a reward. Great job, Harry!")

When the student is in general education settings, here are some pointers:

- Provide lots of opportunities for the student to demonstrate the skills in this chapter (all day long, in every situation). For example, the bus driver can remind the student to make eye contact, the other students can give him or her a signal if he or she gets too loud in class, and Mom or Dad can require him or her to sit during mealtime.
- Teaching one-to-one is intensive and requires adequate help. Set aside small chunks of time for this structured teaching approach and look for opportunities during the day (before school, during tutorials, during journal writing time, while other students are working in groups, or during silent reading time).
- Make sure that everyone in the student's environment is noticing and reinforcing the student when he or she demonstrates these key skills. Everyone should give the student lots of attention when he or she gets it right!

The following chapter will cover cooperation skills.

CHAPTER 11

COOPERATION SKILLS

Once students have mastered the skills that prepare them for learning, they are ready to move on to cooperation skills. The three cooperation skills in this book focus on following directions in school and at home.

The more readily students comply with requests and cooperate with others, the faster they can begin to learn other skills. When students fail to cooperate, teachers and parents may spend too much time coercing, encouraging, or chasing down students and have little time or energy to actually teach new skills. **You** may be impatient and want to move on to higher-level skills, but without positive cooperation skills, students are likely to be unsuccessful in the learning process. You can't fly the airplane until it's built!

Cooperation skills are also critical to ensure students' safety. If a student fails to follow directions in dangerous or unfamiliar situations, he or she could get hurt. This is especially true in the larger community outside the school building. Complying with requests like "Stop at the corner," "Wait for me," or "Come here now," can make the difference between remaining safe or incurring a serious injury.

Cooperation skills will also improve relationships with parents and other adults (think grandparents!). No one likes a child or adolescent who is defiant, noncompliant, uncooperative, or spoiled. If a student lacks good cooperation skills, people may fail to appreciate that student's positive qualities and may not take the time to get to know how delightful or interesting he or she really is. For older students, mastering these cooperation skills will make the transition to work easier, as the same skills are necessary on the job. (The only difference is that the student will be dealing with a boss or supervisor instead of a teacher.) Finally, even after students grow into adulthood and leave school, cooperation skills remain important to success in families, the workplace, and the community. (Don't you wish that all the adults you know had mastered these skills?) The skills for learning to cooperate are:

A. Following a Simple Direction

B. Stopping When Told

C. Waiting to Begin

This chapter will explain Following a Simple Direction as an example of how to teach this group of skills. The same principles can then be generalized for teaching the other two cooperation skills. This chapter explains the direct teaching sequence, including some specific suggestions regarding what to say and some handy advice based on the authors' practical experiences. Again, the sequence here will follow the structured teaching steps explained in detail in Chapter 8. It may be a good idea at this point to review the information in that chapter.

Skill 11-A
Following a
Simple
Direction

Chapter 11, Skill A (11-A): Following a Simple Direction

Before you begin:

1. Be sure to read the entire teaching sequence (following) before you begin, so that you understand what to do and how to do it.
2. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.
3. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
4. Gather other necessary materials, including:
    - Positive reinforcers such as small food items in plastic bags; small toys; or a tape recorder/CD player with music
    - A timer or stopwatch **Kit**
    - A sign or poster that shows a symbol for following a simple direction, such as a green light or other "go" sign (one is available in the Materials Kit) **Kit**
    - A buzzer, bell, or other noise maker that can indicate time to begin and time to end **Kit**
    - A photograph of the student doing something that you are going to direct him or her to do during this teaching sequence
5. Create a sign or poster using the You Got It! You Get It! form: The left side should show a symbol for following directions; the right side should show the reinforcer you plan to use. **Forms**
6. Make sure your plan includes a variety of communication styles: Do not just tell the student what to do, but also use modeling, visual and auditory cues, symbols, pictures, prompts, signs, and other communication tools.
7. Set the timer or stopwatch before you begin and decide how many repetitions you will use in your lesson.

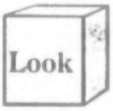
The primary goal of this skill is to follow an adult's direction. At this point, it really does not matter what you are requesting or directing your student to do as long as he or she follows the direction. Choose a behavior that you have already observed (something you know that the student can do because you have seen him or her do it). For example, if you know that the student can sit down, make your first direction "Sit down."

Following is a list of simple directions that most students can perform, even when they are very young or have significant communication difficulties. Also listed are the words that you may want to use to teach these skills. Choose only those skills that you know the student can do easily and has done independently. Some ideas:

- Come when called ("Come here," or just "Come.")
- Point to named objects ("Show me _____," or "Point to _____.")
- Imitate a movement ("Do this," or "Do _____.")
- Sit at a table ("Sit down now," or just "Sit, please.")
- Stop when told ("Stop," or "Stop ______.")
- Stand up ("Stand up.")
- Give me a hug ("Big hug!")

Step 1: Stop

To get the student's attention, use your chosen symbol or sign to indicate that it's time to work (the one you chose in Chapter 8) paired with a simple verbal instruction like "Stop. Time to work." As the simple directions you will use to teach the skill can include physical movements and responses, it may not be necessary to be seated at a table to teach this skill. For example, if your first simple direction is "Come here" and requires the student to walk to you from across the room, you obviously will not teach it sitting down. However, if your simple direction is to touch an object ("Touch the book"), both you and the student should be seated at a table so that he or she is more likely to attend to the teaching sequence.



Step 2: Look

Next, get the student's attention. Clearly say "Look at me," or "Look," and, if necessary, use a gesture like pointing to your eyes. Probably, the student will look immediately as you have already taught this prerequisite skill. If he or she does not, go back and review Chapter 10.

Step 3: Listen

Begin the sequence with your consistently used cue word. (Again, use the one you chose in Chapter 8.) For example, say, "Ready?" The teaching sequence might look and sound like this:

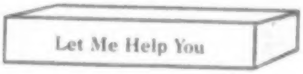
- "Ready? Good."
- Then make your first simple request, something like "Elisa, please come here."
- As you give the direction, open your arms or hold out your hands and motion toward yourself, cueing the student to come to you. For students who are nonverbal or who have poor receptive language skills, make sure to pair the verbal direction with the sign for "Come here" or a picture symbol or exaggerated gesture.

Watch
Me
Do
It

Step 4: Watch Me Do It

With the assistance of another teacher, a teaching assistant, a student, or a family member, model how to follow a simple direction (in this example, "Come here.") Use this procedure:

- Say "Come here" to your helper.
- The person modeling the skill should **immediately** come to you.
- As soon as your helper has come to you, praise the person enthusiastically, specifically acknowledging that he or she has followed your direction. In other words, don't say "Thanks for coming here"; say "Thanks for following my direction," or "Thanks for doing what I asked," or "Good cooperating." Remember, the skill you are now teaching is to follow a simple direction. It really does not matter what the direction is.



Step 5: Let Me Help You

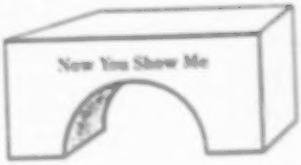
If, after giving the verbal direction and waiting approximately two to five seconds, there is no response from the student, use some simple prompting. To provide guidance for following a simple direction like "Come here," follow this prompting sequence:

- Repeat the verbal direction again, paired with a gesture, and wait another two to five seconds.
- If the student does not respond to the verbal direction alone, you can hold out a desirable object (maybe a bite of food or a toy that makes an interesting sound) to encourage him or her to follow your direction. Of course, don't give the student the toy or food unless he or she follows your direction.
- If the student still does not follow your direction quickly, have your helper give the student a gentle physical prompt to stand and move toward you. For example, your helper could gently nudge the undersides of the student's arms to let him or her know to stand, and briefly place a hand on the student's back to coax him or her forward.

- If the student still does not follow your direction, even with an incentive or a gentle touch, you may need to use a stronger physical prompt. For example, you may need to take the student's arms and pull him or her gently toward you or have your helper push him or her toward your open arms. If you are working alone with the student and do not have a helper, you will need to physically assist the student by guiding him or her toward you. Gently reach out and grasp the student's arms, pulling the student to you for a hug. Once again, use caution not to try to force the student to move. The prompting is to help teach and guide, not to physically coerce the student to do what you want. Keep things positive and light!

Repeat this prompting sequence each time you give the direction. Once the student complies with your request immediately, stop using the physical prompt and just use the verbal direction. Don't forget to stop working after ten minutes or ten trials even if the student has not yet followed your simple direction. You do not want to set up a frustrating or confrontational situation.

The Now You Show Me step will explain how to know when the student has mastered following a simple direction.



Step 6: Now You Show Me

Eventually, you will expect the student to follow your simple directions within two to ten seconds of your giving the directions, every time you ask, without needing a physical prompt. Remember that the point here is to follow a simple direction that the student has already demonstrated his or her ability to do, not to master a complicated new skill or to perform an unpleasant task.

After you teach this skill for ten consecutive days and your student is following directions 95-100% of the time, consider it mastered. The student should follow all of the directions you give him or her, so make sure that your teaching includes many different requests.

You
Got It!
You
Get It!

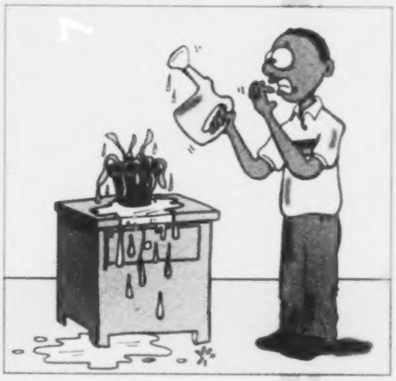
Step 7: You Got It! You Get It!

As with the other skills previously introduced, the last but most important step in teaching is to provide positive reinforcement.

- Whenever you give a student a direction and he or she follows it quickly and cooperatively, praise the student immediately. Include in your praise a statement referring to his or her following your direction. Regardless of what the direction was, keep on letting the student know how much you appreciate his or her doing what you ask.

- Continue to also use plenty of enthusiastic facial gestures, claps, and smiles.
- You may also want to point to the reward section of the You Got It! You Get It! form, indicating the relationship between the behavior and the tangible positive reinforcement that you are going to provide. Deliver the reward that you promised. Whatever the reward, present it immediately, while you are describing the behavior.

Forms



The verbal praise you use for this skill should always reinforce the following of a direction. While the behavior itself may be a useful, positive behavior, stay focused on what you are teaching: following a simple direction. For example, if your son Tommy accidentally spills water on the floor when you ask him to water the plants, you should still say, "Thanks for following my direction!" And when Jessie comes when you call her, you say, "Good girl! You did what I asked!" not "Thanks for coming."

When setting your criteria for mastery of this skill, consider these factors:

- There are many reasons that students should learn to follow a simple direction, especially students who are very young and/or highly impulsive. If the student does not follow simple directions, he or she will likely have conflicts with authority figures in school, on the job, and in the community. So start with directions involving tasks you know the student can already do and keep your expectations very high. With these students you may want to require close to 100% mastery of this skill, especially when it involves simple directions.
- As students get older and you want to encourage decision making and independence, then you will obviously not desire or require them to follow directions all of the time. Making decisions for ourselves is an important part of maintaining our individuality and functioning autonomously. As we become more mature and gain skills for independent living, all of us should be allowed to make choices and determine our own lifestyles.
- As students progress, make a conscious effort to reduce the number of directions that you give and to provide more opportunities for students to make their own choices. Out of respect for adolescent or adult students, set up situations in which choices are offered rather than directions given.

The other skills addressed in this chapter are Stopping When Told and Waiting To Begin.

Again, the following section will provide some practical suggestions that should make teaching these additional skills easier.

Chapter 11, Skill B (11-B): Stopping When Told

Before you begin:

1. Be sure to read all the teaching information (following) before you begin, so that you understand what to do and how to do it.
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
3. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.
4. Choose a very strong reinforcer for this skill, as many students resist stopping an activity when they are having fun. (Remember: "What's in it for me?")
5. Decide how much time you are going to allow the student after you have given the direction to stop. During the initial stages of teaching a student to stop when told, it is not essential that he or she stop immediately because he or she is still learning to make the connection between the word or symbol for "stop" and the behavior that you are expecting. However, you should move steadily toward a very rapid reaction time, especially if you have concerns related to the student's safety. Stopping is sometimes essential to avoid getting hurt (e.g., stopping from running into traffic). Your long-term goal will probably be to make sure the student generalizes the skill, so you will eventually expect the same speed of response, regardless of the conditions or setting.
6. If there is any doubt about whether a student can safely learn this skill, consult a professional for assistance and advice. Using physical restraints such as child harnesses or leashes with the student will not teach him or her to stop when told. If anyone else has been using these methods or if the student has required continual close supervision, we recommend that you not begin to teach this skill until you have sought and received professional advice and support.

TIPS

Here are some tips for teaching a student to stop when told:

- Be sure to emphasize auditory cues. Use a whistle, snap your fingers, clap, or say the student's name strongly and firmly (don't forget most parents' old standby of calling for their child by using his or her complete, formal name, including first, middle and last). **Kit**

- At first, you may want to use a physical prompt. If the student is engaged in an activity which requires use of his or her hands and the student has not stopped when directed, take the student's hands and place them flat on the table or in his or her lap. As soon as he or she complies willingly and stops resisting, praise him or her immediately. If the direction relates to movement (e.g., "Stop walking"), have someone help you teach the skill. Then if the student does not stop, the helper can gently hold the student by the shoulders or step in front of the student to block his or her path so that he or she has to stop. Again, praise the student as soon as he or she stops.
- As when teaching any new skill, reinforce every time the student stops when told to do so.

Skill 11-C Waiting to Begin

Chapter 11, Skill C (11-C): Waiting to Begin

Before you begin:

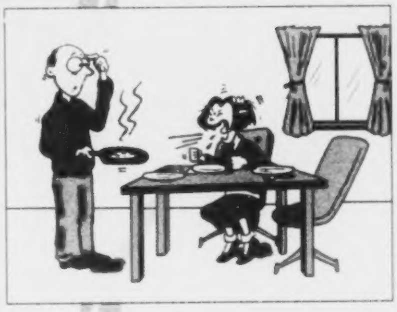
1. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
2. Define what you mean by the phrase "waiting to begin." The See/Hear chart is a useful tool for teaching this skill, as it can guide you in identifying what you want the student to do and say (or not say). For example, when the student is waiting at the table for food, you may want him or her to sit in a chair with hands in his or her lap without talking or screaming. So these are the behaviors you will teach by modeling and coaching, then reinforce. Refer to Chapter 10 again if the student does not already have these prerequisite skills. **Forms**
3. Remember that some students will not have any idea what you mean when you say "Wait," because it means different things to different people in various situations. This skill may require a lot of modeling.

TIPS

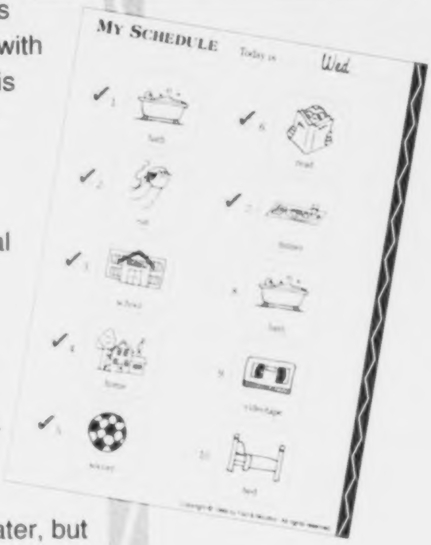
Here are some practical ideas that should help you as you teach the student to wait before beginning:

- Learning to wait may be easier if you provide the student with an activity that keeps him or her occupied. Crayons, pencils, and pens with paper keep many students engaged and calm. Hand-held toys or mental puzzles also work. Oral recitations of songs, chants, or phrases may also divert a student's attention and make waiting easier. Involve siblings or peers in two-person activities with the student whenever possible.

- Make sure you don't reinforce the wrong behavior. For example, if a student is sitting at the table waiting to eat and is screaming, you have a decision to make. Do you reinforce the student for sitting and waiting or do you require that the student sit, wait, and stop screaming? Recognize that if you go ahead and feed the student after he or she yells for ten minutes, you have just taught him or her to scream at the table in order to get food and attention. Be clear about your criteria for acceptable performance, then be consistent.



- Be sure to include visual signs or signals that indicate the need to wait. A clock face with hands or a timer are great tools to use here. They are portable, so you can provide practice with waiting in many different situations and at random times. This type of practice will speed up learning and improve generalization and maintenance of skills.



- Individuals who have difficulty waiting or transitioning will benefit from the use of a picture or symbol schedule. Several basic designs are discussed in Chapters 2-3 of this book. Consistent use of a schedule communicates very clearly to a student that if he or she stays on track and completes the required work or less desirable activities, eventually he or she will have access to some preferred, enjoyable activities. This makes waiting easier. It may take some time for the student to establish the connection between what he or she must do now and what he or she will be allowed to do later, but the schedule teaches waiting as well as sequencing.
- Continue to use powerful reinforcers. The You Got it! You Get It! form will help you here. Show the student the form, show him or her the actual reinforcers whenever possible, and state clearly what the student must do. Reinforce consistently, always stating exactly why the student is getting the reinforcer.

Forms

The following chapter will discuss how to teach imitating and matching skills.

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CHAPTER 12

LEARNING BY IMITATING AND MATCHING

Taking turns, imitating motor movements, and matching objects are skills that serve two important purposes: First, these skills provide opportunities for positive social interactions with others. Second, and probably more important, imitation and matching skills help students learn how to learn. We humans have all learned skills by imitating what is modeled for us. Often, this approach helps us learn those skills more quickly and efficiently than we could have by just reading or hearing about them.

> *For example, changing a fuse in your car can be simple if the mechanic shows you where to look and explains how to pull the tiny fuse out and check it. For most of us, the mechanic's modeling is more effective than if we were to just read a repair manual and do it by ourselves. While both approaches may eventually get the job done, changing the fuse with just the book may become frustrating, tedious, and time-consuming. Worse yet, we may get so discouraged that we give up, trade in our car, and buy a horse!*

Many children naturally imitate the actions of others, so using imitation and matching as teaching tools makes good sense and is easy to do. Before you teach the skills in this chapter, it is a good idea to make sure the student has mastered the skills in Chapters 10 and 11. Without them, teaching imitating and matching will be difficult, if not impossible.

Imitating and matching skills are important in all environments; they help students learn social as well as academic behaviors. Although a certain amount of individuality is appreciated and acceptable, students who are **too** different at school may not fit in and may not develop friendships. If a student fails to take turns and behave as others do in social situations, he or she will likely be perceived as odd or different. In the workplace, adults who do not fit in may not be included in group activities and may be disliked by others. Adults who lack good social skills may miss out on opportunities to socialize and may fail to develop a network of friends. This isolation, in turn, gives them fewer opportunities to practice the social skills they do have.

When the student is in general education settings, take advantage of the many natural opportunities to practice imitating and matching. For example, students can benefit by participating in simple activities such as passing out materials and supplies in class and then collecting them again at the end of class. Materials that are needed during the day can be placed in cabinets that are labeled with a photograph or a picture symbol of the supplies. Throughout the day students will learn by observing and imitating social skills that other students and teachers naturally model. Look around the environment and maximize these natural opportunities to practice imitating and matching skills!

The imitating and matching group consists of three fundamental skills:

A. Taking Turns

B. Imitating Motor Movements

C. Matching Objects

The skill of Taking Turns will be explained as an example of how to teach this group of skills. Just as in Chapters 10 and 11, this chapter will explain the direct teaching sequence, including ideas for what to say. The same principles can then be used for teaching the other two skills in this group. This chapter will also provide some alternative approaches and special considerations unique to the skills of Imitating Motor Movements and Matching Objects.

Skill 12-A
Taking Turns

Chapter 12, Skill A (12-A): Taking Turns

Before you begin:

1. Read the entire teaching sequence (following).
2. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.
3. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
4. Gather other necessary materials, including:
    - Positive reinforcers such as small food items in plastic bags; small toys; or a tape recorder/CD player with music
    - Some toys and games that two people can play together (a large, soft ball, bubble soap with a bubble blower stick, a puzzle, or any other toy that can be shared)
    - A timer or stopwatch **Kit**
    - A sign or poster that has a symbol for taking turns (e.g., two people together playing; a sign for taking turns is available with the Materials Kit) **Kit**

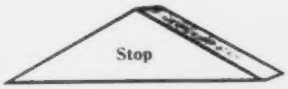
- A buzzer, bell, or other noise maker to indicate that something is starting or that it is time to follow a direction

Kit

- A photograph of two students doing something that involves taking turns

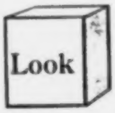
5. Create a sign or poster using the You got It! You Get It! form: The left side should show a symbol for taking turns; the right side should show the reinforcer you plan to use.
6. Make sure your plan includes a variety of communication styles. Do not just tell the student what to do, but also plan to use modeling, visual and auditory cues, symbols, pictures, prompts, signs, and other communication tools.
7. Set the timer or stopwatch before you begin and decide how many repetitions you will use in your lesson.

A key to teaching turn taking is to start with a physical activity that you know the student can do and really enjoys. For young students, a perfect activity for teaching Taking Turns is blowing bubbles, because it is interesting, easy, and fun. For older students and for adults, an old-fashioned water balloon toss is ideal for teaching Taking Turns (everyone gets a turn to throw a water balloon). However, almost any game will do, as students can take turns putting pieces into a puzzle, rolling a ball back and forth, throwing a ball, shooting an indoor foam-rubber basketball at a hoop, or pushing a switch to activate a toy. The key is to find something the student likes, so that the turn taking is more likely to occur. Choose a toy or game and begin to teach!



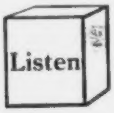
Step 1: Stop

To get the student's attention, use your visual symbol or sign (remember, it could be a work symbol, green card, clock picture, etc.) paired with a verbal instruction such as "Stop. Time to work." If you think that the student will need physical prompting when learning turn taking, position yourself behind or next to him or her. You could also have another adult stay near the student to help with the prompting. It is more important to have a helper if the turn-taking activity involves gross motor movements like rolling a ball back and forth or throwing balloons, as you cannot remain close to the student and still perform the activity.



Step 2: Look

The next step is to get the student's attention. Clearly say "Look at me," and, if necessary, use a gesture such as pointing to your eyes.



Step 3: Listen

Begin the sequence with your consistently used cue word, then follow a teaching sequence similar to this one:

- Say "Ready?"
- Make your first simple request: for example, "Sam, let's take turns."
- Say "Ready? My turn. Now your turn," or "It's Daddy's turn, now Sam's turn."
- While you are saying "My turn," take your turn at performing the activity. Then, turn to the student and as you say "Your turn," gesture for the student to perform the activity. If the student seems confused or is having difficulty learning the skill, encourage him or her with exaggerated arm movements, facial expressions, and an enthusiastic, happy voice.
- Make sure that you also use photographs or symbols along with your verbal directions (e.g., a picture of you performing the skill paired with a picture of the student performing the skill). If you remember to choose an activity that the student does as a normal part of his or her routine, then you should have no problem getting a picture.

Watch Me Do It

Step 4: Watch Me Do It

If turn taking is difficult for the student, include a classmate, family member, or other adult and arrange an activity in which all of you practice taking turns. This arrangement provides additional practice and should make the activity more fun. If two or more of you are modeling, make sure that everyone is enthusiastic. Praise your helper and the other students for their turn taking, too. Position the student between you and your helper to provide a clear, close view for him or her (and, in some cases, to prevent the student from escaping the situation).

When the student is in general education settings, try breaking students into smaller groups and incorporating activities that use turn taking. This arrangement will provide many natural opportunities for the student to observe turn taking, as well as giving other students a chance to practice and model this skill.

Let Me Help You

Step 5: Let Me Help You

If, after your giving the verbal direction and waiting approximately five to ten seconds, the student has not initiated action or paused for you to take your turn, use some simple prompting. Here is a basic prompting sequence:

- Repeat the verbal direction, paired with a gesture. Wait another five to ten seconds.

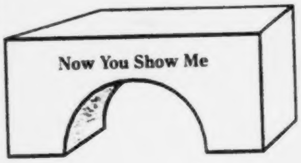
- If the student does not begin the turn-taking interaction after this verbal direction, use a picture set that includes a picture of you, then a picture of the student. As you repeat the sequence ("Gina's turn, now Billy's turn"), first show your picture, then the student's.
- If the picture cues don't get the student jump-started, show him or her the You Got It! You Get It! form, so he or she knows what goodies are waiting after he or she takes turns.

Forms

- If the picture cues are not enough, hold out the actual item you are using for reinforcement (maybe a desirable bite of food or an engaging toy). Students who are very resistant, very young, or have poor memories may need this concrete motivator.
- If the student still does not begin to take turns, you or your helper can use a gentle physical prompt. For example, if you are taking turns blowing bubbles and the student refuses to pass the wand to you after his or her turn, gently guide the student's hand toward you while praising him or her for letting you have a turn (e.g., "It's nice of you to share. Thank you," in your gushiest voice). If the student resists, be a little more firm and keep on talking while you walk him or her **quickly** and **matter-of-factly** through the motions, so that you accomplish your goal without allowing a power struggle to begin. Move right into your turn, without dwelling on the student's resistance.

For a student to master turn taking, prompts must be faded eventually; otherwise, the student hasn't **really** learned to take turns. As with other skills, use about ten trials (turn-taking opportunities) during one instructional period. Keep the activity fun for both of you!

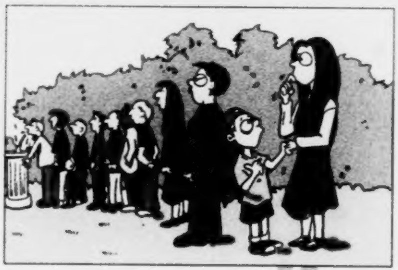
Because turn taking usually involves observable gross motor activities, it is easy to tell when the student has mastered this skill. The following section explains some simple criteria and guidelines for evaluating mastery.



Step 6: Now You Show Me

Some or all of the following criteria should be met to demonstrate mastery of turn taking. When a student is asked to take turns, he or she should do so:

- In a natural rhythm for the activity (If you two are rolling a ball back and forth, the student should not sit for five minutes without pushing the ball back to you)
- Automatically, without physical prompting
- Naturally, in situations that occur in everyday life (e.g., if several people are lined up at a drinking fountain, the student should wait his or her turn rather than pushing to the front of the line)



You might need to identify the turn taking situations for the student at first ("Oh look, Billy. There's a line for the drinking fountain. Let's wait our turn."). Eventually, though, the student should wait and take his or her turn without your assistance.

After you teach this skill for ten consecutive days and the student is taking turns most (75-100%) of the time, consider it mastered. The student should be able to take turns both in structured situations that you set up as teaching opportunities as well as in natural situations that occur in many environments.

You
Got It!
You
Get It!

Step 7: You Got It! You Get It!

As usual, provide positive reinforcement. Again, the key guidelines for effective positive reinforcement include:

- Praise and/or reward immediately.
- Specifically mention the turn-taking skill in your praise ("Thanks for letting me have a turn.").
- Continue to use enthusiastic facial gestures, claps, and smiles.
- Use the reward section of the You Got It! You Get It! form to remind the student exactly why he or she is receiving attention and praise.

Expect that the initial stages of teaching turn taking might feel phony and awkward. (If you are making someone take a turn, are they really learning to take turns?) Awkward, artificial, and "staged" situations may be necessary at first, but these should lead to more natural, spontaneous turn taking. Eventually, when the student offers you a lick of his or her double-dip ice cream cone and says, "Your turn," congratulate yourself and know that you've been a great teacher.

Keep in mind the many reasons that turn taking is a valuable skill:

- Taking turns is a very social, interactive behavior. Many students with autism, communication disorders, and/or pervasive developmental disabilities do not initiate interactions with other people. They often fail to make eye contact; choose inanimate objects for play; resist touching; and avoid conversations. For these students, turn taking is critical because it forces them to interact with other people. It also provides opportunities for success and gives them positive feedback, including smiles, shared laughter, and praise.
- Turn taking is also a fundamental building block for language development. Just as turn taking is a reciprocal, back-and-forth activity, conversation relies on the same principle. Meaningful language requires an understanding of this two-way, reciprocal process. Turn taking sets the stage for sharing ideas through the use of language.

- Taking turns is one of those "people pleasing" behaviors that will help students fit in socially with both peers and adults. (Nobody likes a "hogger" who refuses to share!)

The rest of this chapter will discuss two more skills that help students to learn by imitating and matching: Imitating Motor Movements and Matching Objects.

Skill 12-B Imitating Motor Movements

Chapter 12, Skill B (12-B): Imitating Motor Movements

Before you begin:

1. Read all the teaching sequence information (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form.

Forms

3. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.
4. Plan to begin with gross motor imitations (movements that use big muscles) rather than fine motor imitations. Gross motor activities are easier for teachers to see and evaluate and easier for many students to perform. Once students understand the principle of imitation, you can teach more difficult fine motor movements.

TIPS

Use these tips when teaching students to imitate motor movements:

- Have a list ready of motor movements that are fun and are easy to imitate (along with some playful names for the activities to help make them appeal to younger students). It is sometimes difficult to think of what you want to do on the spur of the movement and with imitations, you will want to keep your momentum. Chose movements that are age appropriate for the individual(s) you are teaching. Here are some suggestions:
  - Clapping hands (applause)
  - Standing up and sitting down (use a "Simon Says" direction)
  - Marching (to music or a drum)
  - Rotating the arms (airplane arms)
  - Raising arms above head (cheering)
  - Swimming arm motions (fishies)
  - Deep knee bends (oompahs)
  - Stomping feet (an elephant herd)

  - Throwing a kiss (movie star kisses)
  - Touching head (patting yourself on the head)
  - Waving good-bye (Bye-Bye)

- Later, you can add some of these fine motor movements to your list of imitations:
  - Touching the nose (clown nose)
  - Touching the mouth (zipper lip)
  - Sticking out the tongue (pretend you're at the doctor's)
  - Winking (we've got a secret)
  - Wiggling the toes (little piggies)
  - Noding head yes or shaking head no (shake it up and shake it down)
  - Making mouth noises (raspberries)
  - Puckering up the lips (get ready for a kiss)

- Teaching students to imitate motor movements is fun. Keep it that way! There are lots of movements that students enjoy, and you can keep these activities pleasant and light-hearted. Students will be learning without realizing it.
- If you have trouble engaging the students, use big, exaggerated movements first. Activities like airplane arms and swimming "fishies," which allow movement around the room, are often motivating.
- Emphasize auditory cues and sound effects to engage the student. Use a whistle, snap your fingers, clap, make airplane noises . . . anything to get the students going. Use different ideas and sound effects that all students are sure to find interesting and get a "kick" out of. **Kit**
- At first, you may want to use a physical prompt to guide the student into the activity. Make it seem like part of a game so that there will be less resistance.
- You will probably use a lot of verbal reinforcement with imitations. If you try to use tangible reinforcers, you may interrupt the sequence of your teaching. Tangible reinforcers may not be necessary, either, as the student will probably enjoy what he or she is doing.
- When you plan a sequence of skills to teach, you might want to carefully consider when to teach imitations. Plan to do motor tasks

between activities that are more sedentary or at the end of a teaching sequence, when you both need a break.

- Don't forget to also plan ahead for where to teach imitations. Make sure you have a clear, wide-open space, so you don't trip or run into things.

Skill 12-C
Matching Objects

Chapter 12, Skill C (12-C): Matching Objects

One basic principle of learning theory is that learning is more efficient and effective if you recognize similarities and differences among objects, ideas, and concepts. When you can group similar things together and exclude things that are different or do not fit, you have learned to categorize. Categorizing not only helps you remember things better but actually speeds up the learning process because you can associate or anchor new learning to prior learning. For example, once you know what an apple is, you will know an apple when you see it whether it is green, red, or yellow. You don't have to consider each new apple individually and try to figure out what it is. Teaching students to match objects is an exciting first step toward higher-order thinking.

Before you begin:

1. Read all the entire teaching information (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form.
3. Decide on what, where, and when to teach. Make sure that your work area is ready.

Forms

TIPS

Tips for teaching Matching Objects:

- Decide on a verbal direction to use consistently. Use something simple like "Put with same" or "Match." Use the same direction every time you present a task involving matching.
- Start at the beginning, and keep it simple at first. Try this simple teaching sequence:
    1. Find two objects that are identical, and start with these two identical objects placed about five to ten inches apart. The younger the student and the smaller the objects, the closer together you can place them. Remove all distractions from the teaching area.
    2. Say "Ready?"
    3. Slowly move the two items together so that they are touching. As you do this, say "Put with same" or "Match."

4. Give a very simple follow-up explanation, such as "See, we put with same." Repeat this explanation at least twice.
5. Separate the two items again and direct the student to "Match" or "Put with same." If the student needs a prompt, just guide his or her hands to push the items together. (Prompting is easy for this one.)
6. As soon as the student has matched the two items by placing them next to each other (or stacking them), reinforce immediately.
7. Increase the difficulty, slowly. Next, add a third item that differs from the other two. For example, if you started by matching two red plastic plates, now add a third object that is something entirely different (such as a hairbrush). Again give the direction to "Match" or "Put with same" and reinforce if the student is correct.

- Vary the placement of your objects. Alternate the location of items so that the two matching items are not always in the same spots. For example, if you are using three items, move the distracter around so sometimes it is directly in front of the student, sometimes to the student's right, and sometimes to the student's left.
- Control your gaze so that you don't inadvertently cue the student and guide him or her to the correct response. Try to look straight ahead or at the student's face, not at the objects being matched.

- Once the student can match two similar objects with one distracter being present, replace the distracter with one that is more similar. In the example mentioned previously, you might now use a third plate as a distracter instead of the hairbrush. Your third plate could be the same size and the same shape as the others, but a different color.
- As you progress, provide many different matching objects and many different distracters. For example, if the student can match the two plates and ignore the hairbrush ten times in a row, change distracters. At first use something very different, but gradually require more and more difficult discriminations. Some options for increasing difficulty include:
  - Randomizing the presentation of objects
  - Randomizing the location of the objects
  - Increasing the similarity of the distracters to the objects
- After the student has mastered basic matching of similar items, it is time to move on and teach the student to recognize categories or

groups of similar objects. Begin to teach him or her to discriminate groups of items (e.g., shoes vs. dishes), and to eventually learn that sneakers, cowboy boots, and sandals are all different, but yet are all shoes. Whenever possible, use concrete objects as teaching tools. By observing and recording the student's responses, you will soon know if he or she is mastering categorizing.

This chapter's group of skills can be taught spontaneously throughout the day and in all environments. Whether you are in the car, out to dinner, in the classroom, or playing with the student, provide opportunities for him or her to practice and learn.

The following chapter will explain how to teach independent learning skills.

CHAPTER 13

INDEPENDENT LEARNING SKILLS

The independent learning skills in Chapter 13 are important because they are stepping stones to independence and self-reliance. Although a student might need lots of guidance and supervision while he or she is young, parents and teachers will eventually want to encourage less dependence on adults and more independent behaviors that lead to self-determination. Skills that lead to independence can be more difficult to teach than some other basic skills: Many parents and teachers find it difficult to "let go" and allow the student to make mistakes, which are a natural part of the learning process. Despite any possible reluctance, though, you should begin to teach independent learning skills as soon as possible, so that students have many opportunities to practice and master them. Once students reach adulthood, everyone will expect and appreciate these skills.

The independent learning skills group includes three fundamental skills:

A. Working Independently and Following a Schedule

B. Initiating

C. Helping Others

This chapter will explain Working Independently and Following a Schedule as the example skill for this group. Just as in Chapters 10, 11, and 12, the direct teaching sequence (including what to say) will be explained first. You can then apply the same principles to teach the other two skills in this group.

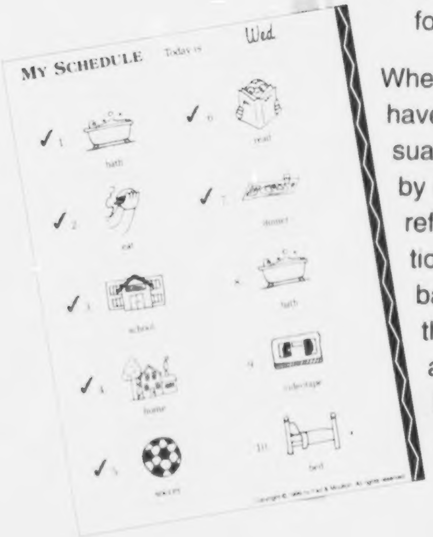
The first skill in this group is Working Independently and Following a Schedule. Of course, it is possible to work independently **without** a schedule, but this program will combine the two as most students do better with the additional support a schedule provides. Chapter 2 includes samples and ideas for different types of schedules. Using visual representations of times, tasks, items, and behaviors on these schedules is a good way that teachers and parents can combine multisensory communication systems with a direct teaching model, connecting both approaches to learning.

Skill 13-A
Working Independently and Following a Schedule

Chapter 13, Skill A (13-A): Working Independently and Following a Schedule

Before you begin:

1. Read the entire teaching sequence (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
3. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready (read the teaching sequence for some suggestions about this).
4. Design and construct a simple and clearly visible work schedule for the individual student you are teaching. (Refer to Chapters 2 and 3.)
5. Gather and arrange all other necessary materials, including:
    - Your positive reinforcers
    - A You Got It! You Get It! form that shows a symbol for working independently and the reinforcer that the student will receive **Forms**
    - A timer or stopwatch **Kit**
    - Your "time to work" symbol (see Chapter 8), or a photograph of the student working (you may want to modify your usual symbol to indicate that this time the student will work alone, not with you or someone else)
    - A sign or poster with a symbol indicating that it is time to stop working (e.g., the stop sign from the Materials Kit) **Kit**
    - A buzzer, bell, or other noise maker **Kit**
6. Decide on how many repetitions you will use and what your criteria for mastery will be.

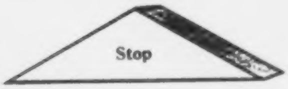


When you first teach a student to work independently, the student will have a better chance of succeeding if you support him or her with a visual schedule. Many adults keep themselves organized and on track by using daily planners, calendars, weekly schedules, "to do" lists, refrigerator lists, and notes to themselves placed in strategic locations. (Our personal favorite is little hot-pink notes stuck on our bathroom mirrors.) The more visual or written cues people have, the more self-reliant they can be. (Instead of your boss having to ask you for the monthly report that was due last week, wouldn't it be better if you turned it in early because you saw the note you wrote to yourself in your monthly planner?) Just as many adults' lives would be a disorganized jumble without these visual reminders, students, too, will have fewer problems staying focused and will function more independently if they have schedules and other visual cues.

There are many types of schedules that work effectively. Choosing the one that best suits an individual student's communication style is important. For help in deciding what the best schedule is for a student, refer to Chapters 2 and 3.

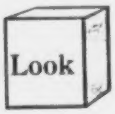
It will probably be easier for the student to keep working independently if he or she is seated, so before you begin, choose a task that can be done at a table or desk. For example, a simple matching task, reading, coloring, writing, or working on the computer would be good choices. To keep the student interested and engaged and to increase the likelihood that he or she will continue to work independently, choose a preferred task: something you know the student enjoys. After all, most people are more likely to stick with something they enjoy (e.g., sitting in a hot tub) than an activity they would rather not do (e.g., completing their tax returns).

When the student is in general education settings, it is important to ask the teacher which skills are most important for the student to do independently. Make a list, then prioritize and teach the most critical skills first.



Step 2: Look

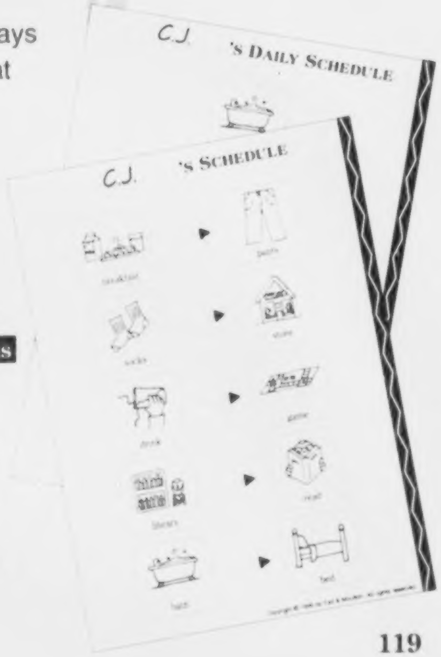
To get the student's attention, use your visual symbol or sign (work symbol, green card, clock picture, etc.) paired with an auditory signal (timer, buzzer, some musical notes, etc.). Immediately after the signals, give your verbal instruction. **Kit**



Step 1: Stop

Get your student's attention by using the standard direction you always use to begin work. For example, you could say "Ready?" or "Look at me."

Next, show the student the visual work schedule you have created for him or her. The student's work schedule can be a simple daily calendar, the work section of the student's daily schedule, a set of work cards with symbols or photographs, a typical calendar, or even the You Got It! You Get It! form. (For information about creating visual schedules, refer to Chapter 2. There are also **Forms** reproducible forms in Appendix B for use in creating visual schedules.) Whatever you use, it is important to teach the student that work time will not go on forever and that after the student completes his or her work, things will change: He or she may receive a reinforcer, move to a different activity or area, stop work to go and eat lunch, or take a break. Schedules are great tools for minimizing



students' anxiety about transitions, for teaching about transitions, and for giving students some control over their own time. Most people feel better when they know what's going to happen to them, how long it is going to last, and what will happen when they are finished.

Remember that all-day workshop in which the boring presenter with the nasal monotone rattled on all day and you didn't know what topics were to be covered, when the next bathroom break would happen, what time lunch would be served, or if, in fact, the day would ever end? Don't you wish you had been given a schedule before you walked in the door? At least you would know how long you had to endure the monotone presenter and you could plan your reward for making it through the day——lemonade anyone?

Listen

Step 3: Listen

Use the following sequence of directions to begin the work session:

- Once your student is sitting and looking at you, begin the teaching sequence with your consistently used cue word such as "Ready?"
- Present the student with a task that you know he or she can do and that he or she enjoys.
- Show the student the visual symbol for "work."
- Pair the visual and auditory signals with a simple verbal direction such as "Time to work," "Now we work," or "Work time."
- As you give this verbal direction, set the timer. To decide how long to set the timer for, consider your student's typical attention span on this task. Then, set the timer for slightly less time than that. For example, if Mikey usually sits and folds laundry for ten minutes without a problem, set the timer for eight minutes so that he is likely to succeed at working independently.
- After the student begins to work on his or her own, walk away from him or her. Begin to do something else so that you appear busy, and do not make eye contact with the student or offer assistance. This is why you have selected a task that you know the student can do alone. Your body language and facial expressions should all indicate that you are busy working alone.
- If the student asks you for help, offer one and only one reminder, perhaps something simple like, "I'm working. You work, too." Or repeat your initial direction, "Time to work."

Step 4: Watch Me Do It

Watch
Me
Do
It

The sequence in the "Listen" section explained in part how to model this skill. Help the student learn to work independently by doing so yourself and by putting the student near others who are already good at working alone and ignoring distractions. At first, you may consider seating the student in a study carrel or separate area of the room. You can also have quiet jobs for yourself, so that you must sit and attend to reading or writing without interrupting others.

For older students, make sure you select vocational tasks and simulated work jobs. For example, you may have a group of four young adults: one who is filing, one who is making photocopies, one who is answering the telephone, and one who is shredding documents. They may all be working in the same area, but it is important that each of them works alone and ignores distractions. This may be very difficult at first, but they can be successful if you teach working independently in this sequential approach. There are several good resources for teachers and parents that provide suggestions for independent tasks; some can be purchased and others can be constructed by teachers or parents. One of the best known and most frequently used is the *Work Jobs* series, from the Addison-Wesley publishing group (see Appendix A).

As the student begins to successfully work independently, consider whether you want to offer praise and positive reinforcement while he or she works or wait until the timer goes off at the end of the work session. Remember that the idea is to encourage independent work, so if you use reinforcement at intervals during the work session, be sure that it is not overly intrusive or disruptive. If the reinforcement is going to interrupt the work sequence, do not use it until after the time is up. Use your common sense here and remember the effect that interruptions have on you when you are trying to concentrate and finish a task. It may be best to wait until later. (Imagine if you're watching the Super Bowl. Do you really want to hear what a great job you're doing popping those soda bottle tops when there are two minutes left in the game, the score is tied, and your favorite quarterback is about to throw a pass?)

Step 5: Let Me Help You

Let Me Help You

If the student has a difficult time working independently (e.g., if he or she gets up, talks, asks for help, or quits working and stares into space), you will have to provide more support and guidance. Try the following three strategies to help with these problems:

Forms & Kit

YES/NO RECORDING FORM

Student's Name

Are you working?

Date

Yes

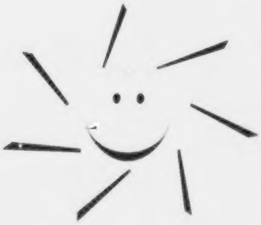
No

- Use the On-Task Beeper Tape (available in the Materials Kit) and the Yes/No Recording Form (from Appendix B). Here's how this process works:

116

1. Set the timer to begin the work session. Use a shorter amount of time than you have been using for the task (e.g., five minutes instead of eight).
2. Set a copy of the Yes/No Recording Form next to the student so that he or she can monitor his or her own progress. This form is intended for the student to use, not the teacher or parent.
3. Instruct the student to mark the "yes" column if he or she is working when he or she hears the beep and the "no" column if he or she is not working. If the student cannot do this, you may have to mark the paper yourself.
4. Start the beeper tape (one side has beeps at regular intervals of two minutes each; the other side has beeps at irregular intervals).
5. Tell the student that you expect him or her to be working each time the beep goes off, which means he or she will mark the "yes" column.
6. Keep in mind that you will need to set criteria for what you consider to be acceptable performance here. It could be 50% "yes" marks at first, then 70%, then 90%, then 100%. It all depends on the student and how much difficulty he or she has with independent work.

- Another strategy for improving a student's independent work skills is the systematic use of frequent nonverbal feedback and reinforcement. Chapter 3 emphasized the importance of using visual communication tools in combination with the direct teaching sequence. Visual reinforcers are very useful in teaching independent skills because they are not intrusive. Here's how this technique works:



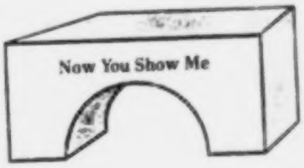
1. Decide on a reinforcement schedule that includes very short intervals (one to two minutes).
2. Select a visual reinforcer. Use one very simple symbol, picture, or word (a smiley face, a star, or the word "Super!"). Once you have decided on one that your student likes, make a whole set of them.
3. Explain to the student that you want him or her to work independently and that if the student does so, you will reinforce him or her. Also explain that during the work session, you will not be talking to the student but will use only the visual reinforcer. Show the student the visual reinforcer and explain that this will be his or her reminder that he or she is doing well.

4. Set the timer for a shorter work session than you attempted previously.
5. As the student works, quietly walk over to him or her and place the visual reinforcer at the edge of the table, beyond the student's reach.
6. Continue to reinforce the student nonverbally in this way throughout the work session.
7. When the timer goes off, praise the student enthusiastically if he or she has worked well independently. You may also want to use the visual reinforcers as part of a token system and allow the student to trade them in for a bigger, better reward (e.g., time to listen to music, play time, or a banana).

- A third strategy involves a systematic reduction of physical prompts. When first working independently, some students may require hand-over-hand guidance or firm pressure on the shoulders to remain seated. Before you begin using such prompts, determine the level of prompting necessary and decide on how you will reduce or fade your level of assistance and guidance. If you have a student who will not work independently and gets up every time you leave him or her to work alone, plan ahead. Track the student's progress as well as your level of prompting; otherwise, time will pass and you will still be using the same prompting level. In order to teach independence, you must "back off" gradually and systematically.

Let's consider Violet. Her teacher, Ms. Morado, would like her to work at her desk for at least five minutes without stopping. Because Violet gets up as soon as Ms. Morado turns her back, Ms. Morado begins by standing behind Violet and guiding her through the task hand-over-hand. A week later Ms. Morado is able to keep Violet working by guiding her forearms. Two weeks later, Violet finishes her work with only elbow prompts. Three weeks into the process, Ms. Morado needs only to place her palms on Violet's shoulders to keep Violet seated while she works. Finally, a month later, Ms. Morado can walk away and Violet keeps working with only one verbal reminder.

The Now You Show Me step will explain how to know when the student has mastered working independently.



Step 6: Now You Show Me

Here are some guidelines to help you determine whether the student's level of independent work is acceptable:

- Consider the nature of the task. Is it something that the student enjoys? Students will always be more cooperative and more likely to work well alone if they like the activity.

- Are you sure that the student is able to perform the task well enough to do it alone? Remember that if you have not yet taught the skill, it is not fair to ask a student to do it without assistance.
- Can the student work independently even when there are distractions in the environment? If not, you may need to introduce distracters and teach the student how to ignore them. This skill will be especially important in the workplace.
- Have you increased the amount of time that the student works independently? Raise your expectations as the student masters this skill, increasing the amount of time you are requesting that the student work by himself or herself. Every student is different, and you will have to decide the appropriate length of time for each individual to work independently.
- Don't forget to monitor, record progress, and reassess. This will remind you how far the student has come and will also help remind you that you should be using lots of positive reinforcement along the way!

You
Got It!
You
Get It!

Step 7: You Got It! You Get It!

Teaching a student to work independently can be very difficult. It requires a step-by-step approach that includes the systematic use of positive reinforcement. Because working independently is such a high-level skill, some reinforcement strategies for this skill were discussed as part of the teaching process. The three strategies described in the Let Me Help You section have linked visual communication tools, a direct teaching sequence, and the use of frequent positive reinforcement. However, here are some brief tips for using positive reinforcement:

- Praise the specific skill you are teaching, which in this case is working independently. Don't get confused and praise the student for the task; rather, remain focused on the skill of working independently. For example, say "Great job working on your own!" rather than, "Great job folding that laundry."
- Remember to use the You Got It! You Get It! form, indicating the relationship between the behavior and the tangible positive reinforcement that you are going to provide. Deliver the reward that you promised. Whatever the reward, present it immediately, while you are describing the behavior.

Forms

- You'll connect better with your students if you remain positive and continue to use positive reinforcement often and enthusiastically. Your students will be happy in your class and enjoy learning from you!

When the student is in general education settings, be sure that adults reinforce independent work consistently. We often ignore students when they are working well alone, then begin to pay attention with reminders and warnings when they get off-task. Set your watch to beep every ten minutes or so and praise students when you hear the sound.

The other two skills in this chapter are Initiating and Helping Others. The following sections will provide practical suggestions to help make your teaching of the other two skills in this group more successful. Each teaching step will not be addressed individually; use the same sequence as was outlined for Working Independently and Following a Schedule.

Skill 13-B Initiating

Chapter 13, Skill B (13-B): Initiating

Before you begin this section, consider what is meant by the term "initiating." In terms of the skills that students need to be successful, "initiating" can be described as beginning or starting an action or behavior without external influence or control. Most parents and teachers want their children and students to do things without being told, asked, threatened, or bribed. To achieve this end, you may need to use some prompts and cues at first, keeping in mind that your long-range goal is to reach a point at which the student begins an action completely on his or her own.

Before you begin:

1. Read all the teaching information (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form.
3. Be clear in your mind about the what, where, and when of your teaching sequence and have all of your materials ready to go before you begin.

Forms

TIPS

These tips should help you teach students to initiate:

- One of the easiest ways to teach a student to initiate is to set up a situation in which the student's action (which he or she must initiate) results in the student's getting something he or she really, really wants.

For example, every day at lunchtime, Herb sits at the lunch table and waits for someone to tell him to begin to eat. It's not that he needs permission; he just won't do anything without being told. Today, you have a new plan. Instead of the usual lunch of salad and refried beans, you have fixed Herb's favorite sandwich, bologna and American cheese on white bread, and his favorite dessert, chocolate pudding. The sandwich is sitting on the plate in front of him and he can see the *chocolate pudding on the counter. Instead of telling him to start eating, you sit down across from him, smile, and begin to eat your own sandwich (turkey breast on wheat with mayo and avocado). Occasionally, you look over at Herb as you casually sip your watermelon smoothie and say, "Wow this is just delicious! I love this sandwich and I was so hungry, too! It really hits the spot! Lunch is my favorite meal!"*

Usually, if you wait the student out in a situation like this, he or she will begin to eat without being told. As soon as Herb takes his first bite, begin to lavish him with praise. Try something along the lines of "Why, Herb, I'm so glad you began to eat without being told! Great job, Buddy. Give me a high five and a big old happy smile!" Then bring on the pudding, place it in front of him, and wait him out a second time, again following up with elaborate praise when he digs in.

- The more preferred the activity (Herb's eating what he really likes, in the previous example), the greater the likelihood the student will initiate the behavior. If you want something badly enough, you'll usually figure out a way to get it. When waiting out a student, remember it may get worse before it gets better. Hang in there and you will prevail.
- Be sure the task or behavior that you want the student to initiate is one that the student is able to initiate. When a student is unfamiliar with a task, is not capable of doing it, is afraid to do it, or hates it, it is unlikely that he or she will initiate the task. So, when you are teaching a student to initiate, use familiar activities that you know this student can complete and select tasks that he or she enjoys. This doesn't mean that the student should always get to do what he or she wants and has already mastered; it just means that during the teaching phase, familiar and preferred activities are more effective.
- If you are having trouble teaching this skill, double check the student's readiness to learn. A student who is tired, bored, hungry, angry, sick, upset, or distracted will usually require more direction and so will be less likely to initiate.
- If you are unsuccessful in waiting out the student, you may need to use prompts that you will then quickly fade out. Prompting is discussed in several other sections of this book; if you review the material in Chapter 8 especially, you will find some strategies for reducing the level of prompting you use. When you prompt less, your student should initiate more. Moving from physical prompts to verbal directions to setting up a situation and waiting should encourage students to initiate.
- Another way to teach a student to initiate activities is to "set the student up" by sabotaging something, hiding something, or feigning

ignorance. Some of these strategies will be discussed further in Chapters 14 and 15 about language, but here are some easy examples of how to do this:

1. Hand the student something he or she doesn't want instead of something he or she does want. For example, give the student the cooking magazine when you know he or she wants the music magazine sitting in plain sight on the table. Then wait for the student to ask for what he or she wants.
2. If you know that the student can say "Drink" but hardly ever does it, you can pretend you don't understand when the student looks at the red cream soda, gestures with his or her hand, and jumps up and down. Don't give the student the soda until he or she says "Drink." You can, of course, look confused and puzzled by the student's behaviors.

When the student is in general education settings, it is important that everyone make an effort to wait for a student to begin an activity, especially one that he or she does not typically do alone. If adults are impatient or think that they can "do it better," the student is unlikely ever to begin to do things for himself or herself.

Chapter 13, Skill C (13-C): Helping Others

Skill 13-C
Helping Others

Before you begin:

1. Read all the teaching information (following).
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning Form and a data collection form.

Forms

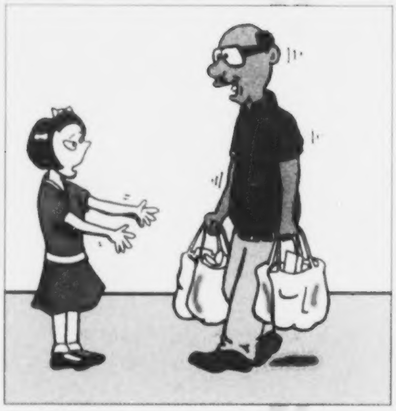
3. Keep in mind that the skill of helping others is a "people pleasing" skill that should help students be accepted by others and develop good interpersonal relationships. There are many ways to help others; appropriate ways will vary according to students' cognitive and adaptive functioning levels. Everyone can help another person somehow, and students who have limited mobility and need a high level of support can connect with others by offering to help.

TIPS

Tips for Teaching Helping Others:

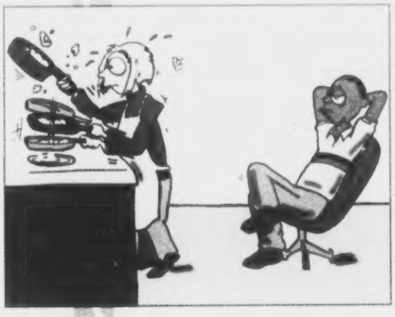
- To start on the road to helping others, it is a good idea to teach some prerequisite skills such as Making Eye Contact (refer to Chapter 10 for a description of how to teach this skill). This skill is important because it helps a student initiate communication with others in his or her environment. It might be possible to offer to help someone without smiling or making eye contact, but without these kinds of basic social skills your student's good intentions may be misunderstood, unappreciated, rejected, or they may even cause fear in others.

- When you begin to teach a student to help others, make smiling the first step in the process. Don't just model and encourage the student to smile, but provide plenty of praise when the student smiles. If it is difficult to elicit a smile, try joking, tickling, laughing, teasing, making faces, or making funny noises. As soon as you see a smile, immediately reinforce, reinforce, reinforce!
- For students who have verbal language skills, teach them a phrase or sentence to use when offering to help. Use the same direct teaching sequence for this skill as is found throughout the book. Try teaching the student a simple question such as "Need some help?" or a statement such as "I can help." Either of these usually gets an immediate positive reaction from the recipient. Even if help is not needed, the student is likely to get some smiles, thank-yous, pats on the back, and gushy compliments. (And, if it's a grandparent, maybe some money in the student's next birthday card!)
- Teach nonverbal students to offer assistance by using an alternative or augmentative communication system. A simple gesture, pointing to a symbol on a communication board, pushing a key or button on an electronic talker, holding out a card with a phrase or symbol on it, or signing in American Sign Language are all effective and acceptable modes of communicating an offer to help.



- The real key to teaching a student to regularly and naturally help others when opportunities arise is the consistent use of genuine positive reinforcement. Fortunately, positive reinforcement for helping others usually occurs naturally, since most people are delighted and impressed when someone offers them assistance. Even if the offer to help might be inappropriate (for example, something the student cannot really do), it is important that everyone still offer lots of praise and appreciation for the offer.
- Publicly praising your student for helping others is fun for both of you. Students are usually thrilled to overhear something nice being said about them. Such praise is even more powerful if it comes from people the student cares about and if it occurs in a normal conversation. Nothing makes you feel better than overhearing somebody say something nice about you, and even if the compliment was "staged," nice is still nice.
- If helping others is directly tied to a reinforcer, students may be more likely to offer help quickly and frequently. For example, if you want help making chocolate chip cookies, **slowly** begin to mix the

dough, while you complain about how long it might take because you don't have any helpers. Whine a little, take frequent breaks, and look around the kitchen and say, "Boy, I wish I had someone to help me. We could get these cookies baked and eat them really fast!" The stronger the link between the activity and a highly desirable reinforcer, the greater the likelihood that help will be offered. As soon as it is, load on the praise and the cookies.



- Consider teaching all levels of this skill. For example, you may teach some students to recognize situations in which they could offer help. Others might be taught a specific routine to help with a specific task. Still others may learn how to read others' reactions and modify their behavior accordingly.
- One problem to anticipate is that you can teach the skill too well. When a student constantly offers to help and becomes a nuisance, you will have to reteach the skill and emphasize the **When?**, **Where?**, and **How?** of helping others. Think ahead about this issue, so that you build prevention into your teaching sequence and so that you do not get irritated with the student.

The following chapter focuses on teaching basic communication skills, such as eliciting sounds, communicating "yes" and "no," and making a choice.

CHAPTER 14

BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Chapter 14 focuses on three basic communication skills:

A. Eliciting Sounds

B. Communicating "Yes" and "No"

C. Making a Choice

This book's suggestions for teaching these three communication skills emphasize verbalizations. Despite this book's emphasis on the importance and appropriateness of all communication modes, verbal skills are still the most common form of human communication. Moreover, as interpersonal relationships are often enriched by sharing ideas and information through conversations, most parents want their children to talk. Although not everyone will use verbal language, parents and teachers should have some strategies available to them so that they can attempt to teach some spoken language skills. You never know what the outcome will be!

Teaching verbal skills may sometimes be a long, laborious task. Remember to be patient and persistent. If you are not formally trained to teach these skills, you should also consider whether you might want someone else to teach these skills if you think you might get frustrated.

The strategies shared here are some that we have found effective with many students; however, there is no guarantee that they will work with everyone. Don't hesitate to try other techniques in your quest to find what will work best for a particular student. On the other hand, if you decide to try some of the ideas here, stick with them long enough to allow them to work. It will often take a big investment of time before you hear results.

We are educators, not speech-language professionals, and our suggestions are based on fundamental instructional practices. For more intensive assessment and interventions or services, though, we recommend that you work closely with a speech-language professional.

Skill 14-A
Eliciting Sounds

Chapter 14, Skill A (14-A): Eliciting Sounds

The first skill in this group, Eliciting Sounds, is a prerequisite to communicating "Yes" and "No" and Making a Choice. For that reason we are presenting it first even though the teaching strategy does not follow the usual sequence of Stop, Look, Listen, Watch Me Do It, Let Me Help You, Now You Show Me, and You Got It! You Get It! Parents and teachers should work on eliciting sounds all the time, in all environments, as naturally as possible. However, you should return to the regular teaching sequence for the other two skills in this group.

Following, you will find a developmental approach to help elicit sounds. This logical, sequential approach fits this particular skill.

Everyone starts to learn verbal language by hearing and producing individual sounds. Students need to hear and say sounds in order to understand the function of language. When a student does not produce any sounds, it is impossible to reinforce him or her for vocalizing and verbalizing. One of the first steps in teaching verbal language, then, is to elicit some sounds. Try these ideas to encourage your student to make sounds:

- Tickle him or her and try to elicit squeals of delight, with "eeeeeeeee" or "yyyyyyyyyyyeeeeeeeeee" sounds
- Blow bubbles on the student's stomach or arm
- Make funny noises (e.g., puff out your cheeks and make "raspberries")
- Bounce and jiggle him or her (gently)
- Play peek-a-boo
- Talk to the student in a silly voice
- Play music, especially repetitive and rhythmic songs
- Expose the student to scents and elicit "oohs" and "aahs"
- Let the student play with a puppy or kitten
- Play in the water with the student (use the tub, a sprinkler, a pool, or the sink)

If you hear the student make a sound (a noise of any kind), immediately do two things: 1) repeat the sound and then 2) reinforce the student profusely.

Repeating the sound lets the student know what he or she did right. Then, your using positive praise like "Good talking!" or "Wow! Look who's talking!" tells the student how important the sound was and how much he or she pleased you. Make sure that everyone who has contact with the student (including family members, therapists, bus drivers, other students, cafeteria workers, instructional assistants, etc.) is aware that you are trying to elicit sounds and is using the same reinforcement strategy.

Researchers know which speech sounds are learned first by most children. As these sounds are easiest to produce, it is a good idea to listen for them and prompt them when eliciting spoken language. The most common first sounds include:

- P
- M
- H
- N
- W
- B

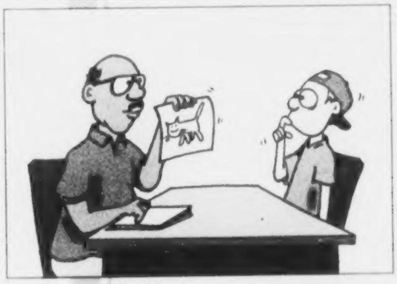
Then, the next ones learned are usually:

- K
- G
- D
- T

(Sander, 1972)

One technique for eliciting these specific sounds is to repeat them often to the student. Say the sounds frequently and say them in close proximity to the student. For example, use a "ma, ma, ma, ma, ma" or "wa, wa, wa, wa, wa" repetition, then wait and see if the student repeats the "ma" or "wa" sound. If he or she does, then, reinforce immediately and enthusiastically.

Eliciting sounds, either through physical activities or modeling, should take place all day long. People use language constantly and children or adults who are learning to speak should be exposed to sounds at every opportunity. If you are going to use a direct teaching situation (for example, sitting across from the student at a table), follow the same guidelines as for teaching any other skill: Start with short sessions repeated throughout the day; cue, then wait for a response; reinforce consistently; and remain positive and patient.



Once a student is producing meaningful sounds or words consistently, here are some tips for continuing to elicit spoken language:

- Place the student's favorite toy in his or her sight but out of reach, so that the student has to make a sound to ask someone to get it.

Decide ahead of time what specific sound or word you want to hear, and do not accept gestures.

- When the student asks for something, give him or her the wrong thing so that the student has to request what he or she really wants by using a word or sound.
- Give the student an item that is difficult to open or use, so that he or she must request help.
- When doing an everyday, routine task with the student, intentionally do one of the steps wrong. Pretend you don't know that you've goofed, and wait for a protest or correction from the student.
- Give the student something he or she really wants, but make it difficult to access. For example, give the student a banana that must be peeled or his or her sandwich in a closed plastic bag.
- Play make-believe games using stuffed animals or other toys, so the student must speak for the animals.
- Use toys that repeat animal sounds. For example, squeeze toys that have recorded farm animal sounds or books that have buttons that play sounds when pushed are great!

When the student is in general education settings, it is important that everyone work as a team to identify the specific sounds, words, and phrases to begin to elicit. Students often say things or make sounds at home that they do not repeat at school or other environments, and vice versa. When a student is just beginning to verbalize, each adult who has contact with him or her should have a quick list of the target sounds or words, referring to it often in order to reinforce and prompt the student constantly.

The next skill in this group is Communicating "Yes" and "No." This skill will follow the typical direct instruction sequence of Stop, Look, Listen, etc.

Skill 14-B
Communicating "Yes" and "No"

Chapter 14, Skill B (14-B): Communicating "Yes" and "No"

Teaching a student to communicate "yes" and "no" is important for several reasons. First, it gives students some control over their environment. When individuals have some control over what happens to them, others get to know them a little better and understand what their preferences are. And the better you know someone, the easier it should be to find something that "works" with them.

Second, communicating "yes" and "no" might help prevent behavior problems. Instead of using aggression, withdrawal, ignoring, self-stimulation, bothering others, or stubborn noncompliance to communicate what they like or don't like, students can indicate their preferences with a simple "yes" or "no."

Third, indicating "yes" and "no" is a link in the behavior chain leading to making choices and developing preferences. Choice making, in turn, leads to increased independence.

This chapter focuses on verbal communication, which is more likely to be understood in people's everyday lives than nonverbal styles of communicating. However, even if some individuals never learn to say "yes" or "no," everyone still needs a way to communicate these two concepts. Most parents and teachers hope that if they teach children to say "yes" or "no" while the children are young, the children will be able to master this verbal skill. But, if this is not possible or if you are the parent or teacher of an adult who seems unlikely to ever speak, you should still continue to teach an alternative way of indicating preferences.

Before you begin:

1. Read the entire teaching sequence, following.
2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form and a data collection form. **Forms**
3. Decide what, where, and when you will teach. Make sure that your work area is ready. This skill is best taught at a table or desk, with you and the student sitting across from each other.
4. Be ready to present one favorite item to the student. When selecting what to present, choose something you know the student wants or likes more than anything else. It doesn't matter whether it's fuzzy pink slippers, a slice of chocolate peanut butter cheesecake, or a favorite magazine, as long as it is something irresistible to the student. Be prepared and have several items available, but keep all but one out of sight at first. Also decide how many trials you will attempt, how long the work the work session will be, and how long you will wait for the appropriate verbal response.
5. Gather all other necessary materials, including:
    - Positive reinforcers such as a favorite toy, other highly desired object, and/or favorite food or drink
    - Two signs, one with the word "yes" and one with "no" (these are available in the Materials Kit) **Kit**
    - Two other signs, one showing a thumbs-up gesture for "yes" and one showing a thumbs-down gesture for "no" (also available in the Kit) **Kit**
    - A third set of signs, one that is green and one that is red (also available in the Kit) **Kit**

- A small toy with a movable head (one of those wobbly-headed toys with the head attached by a separate spring or coil is best; you can find these in toy stores)
- A buzzer, bell, or other noise maker that indicates that it is time to start and stop working

Kit

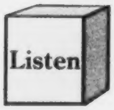
More than almost any other skill discussed in this book, communicating "yes" or "no" should be taught all day long, in every environment, by everyone. However, to get started, the student may need some formal instruction. Following is the sequence of steps to teach your student to say "yes" and "no." This discussion assumes that the student can talk and that you (or someone) has heard words on several occasions. The issue is to build a consistent use of words or phrases by everyone involved, so that the words have the same meaning in every situation and also so that they are used consistently by the student. For students who have no verbal language at all, attempt to teach spoken responses but be ready to teach consistent nonverbal communication skills as well.

Step 1: Stop

To get the student's attention, use both your visual symbol or sign (from Chapter 8) paired with an auditory signal (e.g., your timer, buzzer, or some musical notes). Immediately after the signals, give your verbal instruction. The verbal instruction should be something simple like "Time to work," "Stop," or "Sit."

Step 2: Look

Get your student's attention by using the standard direction you always use to begin work (e.g., "Look at me").



Next, get ready to present the one favorite item to the student.

Step 3: Listen

The verbal teaching sequence will be given here for teaching "yes." "No" will use essentially the same sequence; however, be sure to read the comments at the end of the You Got It! You Get It! step about teaching "no." Use the following sequence to teach "yes":

1. Once the student is sitting and looking at you, begin the teaching sequence with your consistently used cue word such as "Ready?"
2. Show the student the highly preferred item you chose previously.
3. As you show the student the item, ask the question, "Do you want __________?" If the student says "yes," immediately give him or her the item along with praise, smiles, pats on the back, etc.
4. After you show the student the preferred item and ask your question, wait approximately 10-20 seconds. Count silently to yourself

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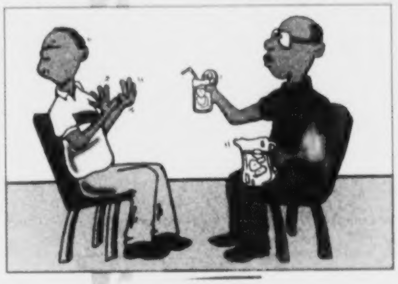
("one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi") so that you allow enough wait time.

5. If the student either fails to respond or responds with a gesture or some other utterance besides "yes," then embellish the question: "Do you want ______________? If you do, say 'yes'" (or "Do you want __________? Yeeeeeeeeessss? Yes!" modeling the word slowly and clearly).
6. If the student says "no," praise him or her for talking but respect the student's wishes ("No? You don't want _______? Okay. But that was good talking").
7. If the student continues to gesture or make incorrect sounds, then clearly and consistently repeat the question and model the response. If the student becomes frustrated and agitated, he or she may use whatever behaviors have worked in the past to get what he or she wants. This is normal and predictable; simply prepared to deal with incorrect responses or perhaps stubborn refusals.



Watch Me Do It

Step 4: Watch Me Do It

The previous step (Listen) included some modeling of how to say "yes." If the student does not say "yes" immediately to your question, you will want to increase your modeling and add some cues. The signs described in the "Before you begin" section for this skill (yes/no in words; red/green cards; pictures of thumbs-up or thumbs-down gestures) can be added to the instructional sequence in this way:

1. After you present the student's desired object, ask the question "Do you want __________?" and while you are saying "Say yes," hold up one of the "yes" cards (the green card, the thumbs up, or the card with the word "yes" on it). **Kit**
2. As you show the card and slowly say "yes," also nod your head up and down.

By doing this, you are using several effective strategies and linking them together so that the idea sinks in and the student is more likely to "get it." Another way to encourage your student to say "yes" is to use the wobbly-headed toy: After you ask the "Do you want __________?" question and as you say "Say yes," tip the toy's head so it bobs up and down, nodding "yes." (Just one more model!)

Let Me Help You

Step 5: Let Me Help You

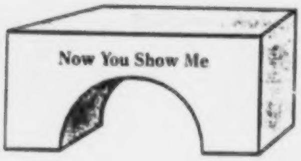
If the student does not say "yes," you may next want to prompt him or her to make some sign indicating "yes." This could be pointing to one of the "yes" cards, holding one of the cards up, nodding his or her head up and down, signing "yes," or using another gesture understood to mean "yes."

The prompts that you use may need to include physical guidance that is gradually withdrawn (this is explained in Chapters 8 and 13). Of course, while you are providing physical prompts, you should also continue to model the correct verbal response, the word "yes."

A second behavior you might need to prompt is the actual vocalization of the word, rather than a nonverbal response. Encourage the vocalization of "yes" through one or more of these techniques:

- Make exaggerated "yyyyeee" sounds (refer back to the previous skill covered in this chapter, Eliciting Sounds). As soon as you hear the student make a sound similar to "yes" or make the same vowel or beginning sound, then repeat the sound the student made, say "yes" again, and praise, praise, praise!
- Also, model just the beginning sound for the student ("y, y, y"). Put your face close to the student's and make the sounds directly in front of his or her face, using exaggerated mouth movements.
- Another technique for encouraging the student to say "yes" or its beginning sound is to sit next to the student in front of a large mirror as you practice the sounds together. This way, the student can watch your face and mouth as well as his or her own as you both talk. This provides not only a model but also a comparison so that the student can self-correct and can modify his or her facial movements to fit yours.
- Tape recordings of both you and the student saying "yes" are also an excellent teaching tool. If they are available or if you can record some, play these for the student. This provides an opportunity for the student to hear himself or herself speak and compare his or her own speech with yours. Then the student can modify his or her sounds to match yours.

The Now You Show Me step will explain how to know when the student has mastered communicating "yes."



Step 6: Now You Show Me

Here are some guidelines to help you determine whether the student's communication of "yes" is acceptable. In one respect, this determination is pretty easy: If the student says "yes" you know he or she has got it. However, there are some special situations to bear in mind.

- If a student has a physical disability that impairs his or her speech (e.g., as sometimes occurs with cerebral palsy or other disabilities), at some point you may need to accept an approximation of the word "yes." One acceptable approximation might be the "y" sound, for example. The point is that the student must use an effective and consistent approximation of the word "yes" and its meaning must be clear and understood. The dilemma is knowing when to accept an approximation and when to keep pushing for the whole word, said correctly.

- In the event that the student is unlikely to ever verbalize a "yes" or "no" response, always have available technology that will enable him or her to communicate. For example, you could use an electronic talker: a device which records a few different spoken phrases and plays each one back at the touch of a different button. (See Appendix A for a source for purchasing such a device.)
- Sometimes, students will say "yes" in some situations but not others. For example, if you ask "Do you want grape juice?" the student may say "yes," but if you ask "Do you want milk?" he or she may sit and stare at you without responding. In this case, first be sure that you are presenting something that the student really wants (if the student hates milk, he or she is never going to say "yes" as long as there is a choice). Next, stop presenting the favorite item (e.g., grape juice) for a while, then reintroduce it to encourage the student to use "yes" more consistently. (Of course, if it is essential that this student drink milk, do not use milk for teaching this skill, as a "no" response is unacceptable.)

- Students may give a different response to one person than to another. This may happen because the student has different levels of relationships and may understand that expectations vary among teachers and parents. It is important that everyone communicate clearly about which responses are acceptable and which are not. Also, everyone involved should be consistent about the approach being used, so that the student is not confused and so that his or her responses will also be more consistent.
- Keep your expectations high. Don't assume that the student can't learn this skill.
- Recording correct verbal responses should be easy; monitor and record responses and code them according to your level of prompting. Keep records of the different approaches you try, so you'll know which ones work best.

You
Got It!
You
Get It!

Step 7: You Got It! You Get It!

Knowing when to reinforce for demonstration of this skill should be easy: When the student says the word, reinforce and praise him or her. One enjoyable way to combine teaching, monitoring, and reinforcing is to make audio or video recordings of the student. You can record both spontaneous language and specific responses during the teaching sessions. These recordings will provide a good record of the student's progress and will enable you to assess qualitative differences in speech. Without such recordings it may be difficult to appreciate improvements in verbal skills, because you don't have a concrete sample for comparison.

After you have successfully taught the student to say "yes" to the question "Do you want ______________?" use additional yes/no questions. More different questions mean more practice and better generalization. Here are some suggestions for simple questions that prompt the use of "yes" and "no":

- Is this ___________?
- Do you want to _____________?
- Is this okay?
- Can you __________?
- Are you ____________?
- Are you ready?
- Do you have enough?

Once the student has mastered the word "yes," repeat the entire teaching sequence for the word "no." However, be careful what you ask when teaching "no." If you need cooperation or cannot allow a choice, then "no" is not an option. In these cases, don't ask a question; give a directive. (For example, don't say "Do you want to check for traffic before you cross the street?"; say "Look both ways.")

The final skill in this chapter is Making a Choice. The following discussion will provide practical suggestions to make teaching this skill easier.

Skill 14-C
Making a Choice

Chapter 14, Skill C (14-C): Making a Choice

Everyone should learn how to make choices and express their preferences. Regardless of the mode of communication they use, the act of making a choice is a critical skill for several reasons. For one, you will find out things about your student that you never knew, especially when it comes to what he or she likes and dislikes. Also, choice making enables students to gain some control over their environments in an appropriate and positive way. If a student is given the opportunity to make some choices regarding what to do, where to go, and when to do things in an appropriate manner, then the student will be less likely to use socially inappropriate behaviors to try to control what happens to him or her. This chapter is focusing on verbal skills, but if your student is not able to master these skills, you should still allow him or her to make and express choices through another mode of communication.

Before you begin:

1. Read all the teaching information (following).

2. Have on hand a Lesson Planning Form or Weekly Planning form and a data collection form.

Forms

3. Determine what, where, and when you will teach.

TIPS

These tips should help you teach students to make choices:

- Use every situation as an opportunity for the student to make a choice or express a preference. For example, everyday situations like these can be opportunities for choice making if they are presented in the correct format:
  - What to wear ("Do you want to wear this? Would you like to wear this or this?")
  - What to eat
  - What to drink
  - What television show to watch
  - When to take a bath
  - What story to read
  - Which pencil to use to write
  - Which earrings to wear
  - Where to sit
  - What music to listen to
  - Whom to play with
  - Which movie to see
- Begin the process by offering **only two** choices. Although this seems very simple, it does require some prior planning. If you are going to offer two choices, then you have to have two choices available. For example, if the choice is between a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a ham sandwich, you must have both on hand and available. You can present two different choices to the student in several ways:
  - Show the student the two items simultaneously (two different shirts in the morning)
  - Show the student two pictures of the items (two different movie ads from the newspaper)
  - Tell the student his or her two choices ("Which one do you want: peanut butter and jelly, or ham?")
  - Provide a menu of choices (two different positive reinforcers)

- To teach a student to make a choice, use a visual prompting system. The I Want folder mentioned in Chapter 5 provides a good framework for teaching this skill. Here's how to use the folder: **Kit**

    1. Locate the folder and pick out two choice cards to use. Start with two items, one of which is highly preferred and one that you know your student does not like. (For example, if Rodney loves cake and hates broccoli at snack time, present the I Want folder with pictures of these items.)

    2. Put the folder on the table in front of the student.
    3. Say "What do you want? Do you want broccoli or cake? Say 'I want ______'." As you are presenting the choices and asking his preference, point to the words and the pictures in the folder.
    4. Even though you know that Rodney wants the cake, do not fill in the blank for him. Just wait.
    5. Wait about ten seconds for a response.
    6. If he points to or picks up one of the pictures, then you repeat the sentence with the correct word. ("Oh, you want cake. Say 'I want cake.' or 'cake'.")
    7. Then wait for about another ten seconds.
    8. As soon as he says the sentence ("I want cake"), give him a big bite of the yummy cake (forget the preservatives and calories).

    In this example, it was assumed that your student has some verbal skills and sometimes talks to get what he or she wants. The discussion concentrates on encouraging consistent verbal choice making; if your student does not talk at all you can still use this procedure to help him or her learn to make choices by pointing or by picking up the picture. It could be that at first, a student may just point to the object he or she wants. That's a good start, and you want to reinforce this nonverbal choice making in order to increase it. However, while reinforcing these nonverbal expressions, keep teaching the student to make a choice with words. And keep in mind: As discussed in the section about teaching "yes" and "no," do not offer a choice unless you can and will honor it.

- As with all skills you teach your student, systematically reduce the level of prompting and increase the complexity and difficulty of the tasks. For example, once the student consistently makes a choice between two items, increase the number of choices to three, then four or more. Also, as the student's verbal skills improve, rely less and less on pictures of objects and ask the student to tell you what he or she wants without any visual cues, using only his or her spoken language skills.

- Continue to use direct instruction, just as you did with the I Want folder in the previous examples. To get you started, several similar folders are available in the Materials Kit. These include specific language prompts, such as: **Kit**

  — I feel ________________.

  — I like ________________.

  — I see ________________.

  — I need ________________.

  — Can you help me with ________________?

  — Is this ________________?

  — Give me ________________.

  — Touch ________________.

  — Now it's time to ________________.

  — Today I ________________.

  — Do you want to ________________?

  — Do you need ________________?

- Before you use these folders for more instruction, create some student-specific choices, including pictures, symbol cards, words, pictures of sign language or gestures, etc. This process can be time-consuming, so plan ahead to take and develop several rolls of film and/or print several sets of computer-generated communication symbols to augment the pictures available in the Materials Kit. **Kit** Allow time also for laminating, cutting, and attaching some form of reusable adhesive to the backs of your picture cards. If you use photographs, be sure to include all environments: home, school, extended family, neighborhood, caregivers, stores, etc. Expand the number and variety of people, places, and things you teach by using the student's world as the source of choices. That way, the choices will be relevant and meaningful.

- When you use each folder, vary the sets of picture or word choices. Using lots of choices will increase vocabulary and give students a chance to express more ideas and preferences. For example, when using the I See folder, you could include several different sets of pictures, such as:

  — People at school

- People at home
- Personal items
- Places to go
- Things to eat
- Leisure activities

  Make sure that the sets of choices include pictures or symbols that are meaningful and important to the student, not just to the adults in the student's environment. Students will communicate more if they get something out of the communication process.

When the student is in general education settings, using the manila folders is a great way to be sure that the student's materials are age appropriate and not too large or "different." This way, the folders can provide support for students without making them stand out.

The following chapter presents suggestions for building on these basic communication skills and for increasing students' use of language.

CHAPTER 15

HIGHER-LEVEL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The organization of Chapter 15 differs from that of the previous five chapters, which emphasized the direct teaching sequence. Instead, this chapter presents some general strategies for improving students' language skills. The strategies focus on providing natural opportunities for language use, stimulating or encouraging interactions, and promoting reciprocal receptive and expressive communication.

Social Interactions

When engaging in typical social interactions, exaggerate your own behaviors and allow enough wait time for the student to respond. Use lots of kisses and hugs for a child in your family or household, and lots of smiles, waves, greetings, and basic conversational chitchat for students. Make sure that you pause long enough for a response, then give lots of good feedback and praise in order to shape the student's behavior toward your goal.

Music

Sometimes students will respond to language that is in music. Select rhythmic music, and include some selections that repeat predictable phrases or words so that students can "fill in" missing words more easily. Audiocassettes, CDs, musical toys, and homemade tapes from television shows or radio are a good start. (If you use homemade tapes, be sure to obtain any copyright permissions you may need.) Also include some tapes you make of people talking and of sounds from family pets (e.g., a dog barking or growling). Ask family members or friends to make tapes that include natural conversations with appropriate pauses for responses. You can also sing to students and encourage them to join you. Musical instruments are also enjoyable and can include traditional instruments as well as alternatives such as squeeze toys and rattles.

Cause and Effect

Set up cause and effect situations in which an action elicits a visible or audible effect that is interesting or enjoyable for the student. Some easy examples include:

- Turning the light switch on and off
- Clicking the television off and on
- Flushing the toilet
- Playing computer games
- Playing with pop-up toys
- Using books that have tape recorded words
- Opening the spigot on the garden hose
- Petting a cat to make it purr
- Feeding pet fish that come to the top of the water
- Throwing out bread to feed pigeons or ducks
- Playing with toys that have "jelly bean" switches (big round buttons with bright-colored pads).

Cause and effect situations are often closely linked to language, because students who understand the relationship between an action and a reaction should soon begin to behave purposefully to get what they want. Part of their purposeful behavior will, it is to be hoped, include communication intended to make something happen.

Once you have used these simple cause and effect situations consistently, encourage the student to use language to express other emotions, ideas, and preferences, such as to:

- Request an action
- Let you know he or she is excited
- Tell you what he or she enjoys and wants
- Indicate when he or she is ready to start, resume, and keep going

Facilitative Play

Facilitative play means playing with your student while "talking through" the process. For example, if you are playing with a puppet, you might use sentences and phrases as you play in order to:

- Model appropriate language ("Mr. Ralph is eating his lunch. Yum, yum.")

- Expand on the subject by asking questions ("What is Mr. Ralph doing? That's right, he's eating a sandwich. What kind of sandwich do you think he's eating?")
- Stimulate independent ideas by asking open-ended questions ("What do you think Mr. Ralph will do next?")
- Reinforce, repeat, and provide a closer approximation of the correct phrase or word ("'Mr. Ralph happy'? Yes, that's right, Mr. Ralph is happy! Why is he happy? That's right, because he got to eat his favorite lunch.")
- Build language through elaboration ("How do you think Mr. Ralph feels today? What would make Mr. Ralph feel better?")

Make-Believe

Use make-believe games and pretend situations with students. Focus on social situations and look for appropriate responses. For example, let students pretend they are:

- Making a telephone call
- Taking care of a sick friend
- Telling someone what to do or letting someone help
- Asking for help
- Asking for directions
- Making arrangements to play with or meet someone later
- At the store and wanting to buy something
- Ordering food at a restaurant
- Asking permission to change the television channel and watch something else
- Expressing a complaint to their boss
- Checking in with their boss after the weekend
- Telling a coworker about their weekend activities

As students pretend or simulate these real-life social interactions, be sure to provide modeling, corrective feedback, and reinforcement. Then, of course, move your pretend and make-believe practice to the real world. Follow up with the same activities in community, home, or school situations! Many students find spontaneous socialization very difficult and frustrating; however, the better they get in social situations, the more accepted and liked they may be and the more confident they will feel.

Games

Games are a great way to build both social and language skills. People of all ages can enjoy games, and games make the learning process more fun. Young students enjoy Simon Says, which teaches receptive language skills, and I Spy, which encourages thinking skills. Older students like charades, which teaches expressive skills and integrates nonverbal cues. Other possibilities for language-related games include:

- Skits or plays
- Water balloon tosses
- Shaving cream play on a table
- Indoor basketball (with a foam-rubber ball, of course!)
- Paddle ball
- Whispering a secret around the room
- Computer games

Games can encourage language use and development by:

- Motivating students to interact
- Requiring turn taking
- Stimulating choice making
- Creating excitement and relaxation
- Setting up situations in which students must ask for a turn or for help
- Stimulating independent actions (e.g., requesting the game, getting set up, and cleaning up afterwards)

Feelings

Tie emotions and feelings to language. When students have problems communicating, they may also have problems recognizing the meaning behind others' body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures. Teach students to recognize their own feelings and to read others' nonverbal communication so that they are more "tuned in" to people in their environment. Here are some ways to help your students improve these skills:

- Have students use the I Feel folder to express their feelings. **Kit**
- Find pictures from magazines and newspapers that clearly depict emotions, and use these pictures to teach students to correctly identify others' feelings.

- Whenever conflicts arise, use the situation as a natural opportunity to teach recognition of others' emotions and to explain cause and effect.
- Expand on conflicts or disagreements to help recognize others' points of view and to develop empathy.
- Use a variety of prompts (pictures from magazines, family photos, etc.) to invoke feelings and help students to articulate them.
- Have students draw pictures and interpret them, including discussions of feelings.

Visual Strategies

Although Part II of this book has emphasized direct teaching, do not forget to integrate the visual strategies from Chapters 2 and 3. In particular, the symbol or picture cards that you created for the student's calendar and schedule can also be used to teach language skills. Use your picture labels (suggested in Chapter 3) to set up a teaching sequence:

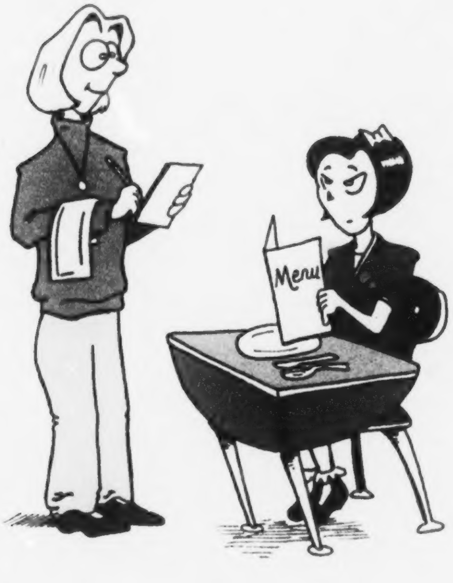
- Start with one picture-word label card.
- Place it on the table in front of the student.
- Ask the student to identify or select the item. (Use a consistent phrase such as "Touch _____" or "Show me _______")
- Wait for 10-30 seconds. If the student touches or points to the object, reinforce him or her enthusiastically.
- If the student does not touch the item, gently guide his or her hand and touch the label card.
- Reinforce the student for touching the correct item.
- Eventually, introduce another card (the distracter), but continue to teach the first card.
- Keep reinforcing every correct response.

Using this same strategy, you can continue to introduce more and more words to the student, so that his or her receptive language and vocabulary gradually grow. Make sure you keep track of the words the student masters. You will be amazed at how well many students do at recognizing items and following your directions to "Touch ____," "Get ____," or "Show me ____".

As students get older, using language effectively to communicate becomes more and more important. After a considerable amount of time and instruction, if a student does not make progress in developing verbal language, consider:

- Consulting a speech-language specialist
- Making sure you have ruled out all medical problems, including side effects of medication
- Evaluating whether speech should be a priority when considering your student's age and other needs
- Assessing the student's overall readiness for learning these and other academic skills
- Improving your teaching team's collaboration and including everyone in the process (family members, school personnel, medical specialists, family friends, etc.)
- Reevaluating the student's disability and its effects relative to speech development

The chapters in Part II have presented strategies for teaching skills in several domains. Unfortunately, though, teaching is not enough. Teachers and parents must also take the next step to ensure mastery of basic skills: focusing on generalization and transfer of skills so that students can use the skills not only in school or at home, but in all their environments and in a variety of demanding situations.

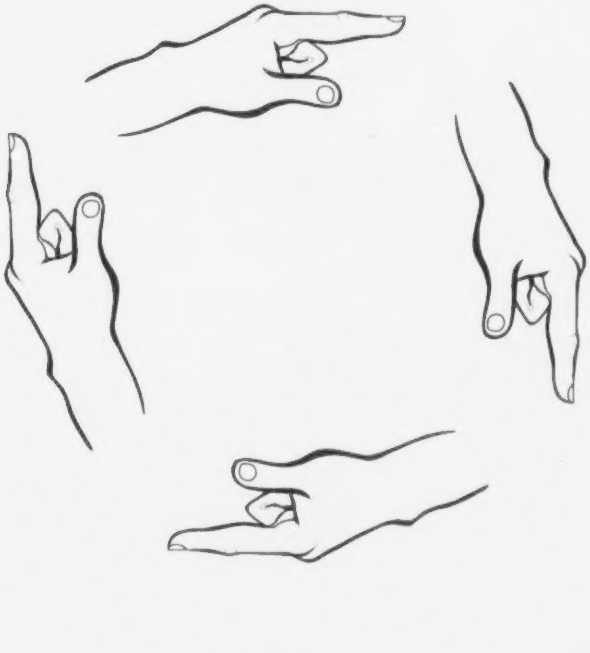


WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Students, especially those with developmental disabilities, often have difficulty generalizing and transferring the skills they learn in one setting or environment to another. Especially in the area of social skills and interpersonal behavior, teachers and parents are often frustrated because they think that a student has mastered a skill, only to find out that he or she does not demonstrate the skill spontaneously in other situations or environments. Because of this, it is important to consciously and systematically teach generalization of a skill once the skill itself is mastered. Students' ability to transfer skills is crucial; otherwise they must relearn each individual skill in each and every setting throughout their lives.

The first chapter in this section focuses on generalization and transfer of skills. This chapter is intended to link together information in the preceding chapters and help you put it all into a clear perspective.

The second chapter in this section will address some common questions and problems that teachers and parents often ask. We have selected questions that we frequently hear from a variety of people who teach, or are parents to, children or adults with a wide variety of disabilities. The answers are presented in a practical format that you should find useful and easy to follow.



CHAPTER 16

HELPING STUDENTS GENERALIZE THEIR SKILLS

This chapter will discuss generalization of skills. For parents of students with disabilities, the issue of generalization is especially important. "Generalization" is a broad term that refers to a student's ability to use his or her skills:

- In other environments (this is called "transfer" of skills)
- With a variety of people (with Dad as well as with Mom)
- At various times in the day (in the afternoon and in the morning)
- With a variety of materials (he or she can drink from all glasses, not just from plastic ones)
- When given different cues ("Look" as well as "Look at me")
- In different places (the student stays in his or her bed at Grandma's house just like he or she does at home)

You can measure the effectiveness of your teaching by how well students generalize skills, as learning a skill does students little good if they can't use the skill when needed.

Fostering Generalization

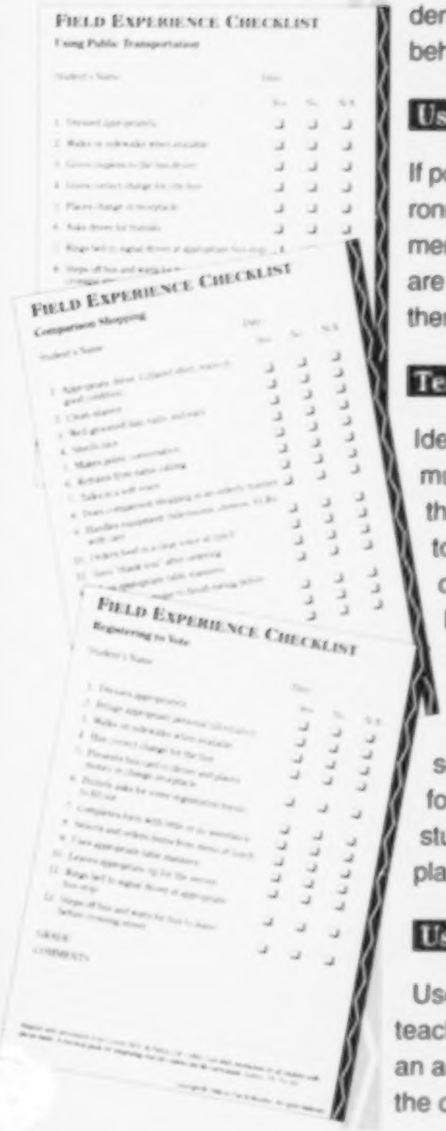
There are several strategies that help students generalize. These strategies rely on principles of behavior change. Most are simple reminders of practices that many teachers and parents already use, but they will be briefly reviewed here.

Plan Ahead

Decide whether you are teaching a skill that the student will be using somewhere other than your classroom or with individuals other than yourself. Hopefully, most of the skills you teach will fit into this category. When teaching a new skill, plan for generalization before you teach. Don't wait until you think your student's "got it" to think about generalization. Planning ahead takes time and effort, but it can prevent problems later.

Visit the Site

It is often helpful to visit a new or different environment before you try to teach a skill there. Site visits provide an opportunity to check things out so that you know what changes the student will experience in terms of physical environment and space, how accessible things are, and whether students can follow the same order in completing the task. For students with autism, who are sometimes hypersensitive to noise, crowds, and smells, this preparation is essential. On the site visit, you can also communicate with others who will be involved. For example, if you are teaching a leisure skill at the horseback riding stables, make sure you have discussed the situation with the personnel who work there. Explain your purpose, the nature of the student's skills and deficits, and exactly what they can expect in terms of your behavior and the student's. When in doubt, communicate and be prepared!


FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST
Using Public Transportation

FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST
Comparison Shopping

FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST
Registering to Vote

Use the Same Trainer

If possible, have the same teacher or trainer teach the skill in the new environment at first. By having the same person do the teaching in both environments, consistency is maintained and transfer of skills is improved. After you are sure that the student can generalize the skill to the new environment, then use a different teacher or trainer to test the student's mastery.

Teach in the Natural Setting

Ideally, skills should be routinely taught in the natural setting: in the community, at home, on a jobsite, or wherever the student will actually use the skills. Get out of the classroom or the house if you expect the student to generalize his or her skills! For many older students and for adults, community-based instruction and job training are common and should be routinely used. However, a community-based learning approach requires that many details be attended to before the instruction takes place: transportation, emergency plans, and personnel assignments must all be considered for the instruction to be successful. There are several checklists available that help teachers, staff, and parents plan for community-based learning, field trips, and everyday activities in which students participate. Some samples that may help as you plan community-based instruction are included in Appendix B.

Forms

Use the Real Thing

Use the real thing while in the real environment. For example, if you are teaching purchasing skills, have the student go to the store and purchase an actual item with real money. (And begin teaching with real money in the classroom, not with those little pieces of cardboard or with

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photocopies!) When a student participates in real-life learning experiences, generalization of skills is much more likely.

Have the Proper Materials

Make sure that you have all the necessary materials to keep the teaching-learning process meaningful and productive. Again, being prepared is the key. When you create materials, plan ahead and make two or more copies of any schedules, calendars, cue cards, communication devices, or signals that students typically use. Students will do better if they have the supports they need and the supports they are accustomed to wherever they go. For example, when you teach a student in the classroom to find food items by matching them to a picture, it is a good idea for the student to use the same set of pictures for shopping at the grocery store. You may eventually expect the student to find the items without the pictures, but at first it's a good idea to make sure there is consistency in the presentation of cues.

It is also important that parents and teachers communicate and share information, so that everyone implements good ideas consistently. For example, if Cindy's mom has a series of specific symbol cards that represent the steps in making an after-work snack and Cindy also uses those cards to make her snack independently, then those same cards should be shared with the community center where Cindy goes every Thursday afternoon to cook.

Troubleshoot in Advance

Anticipating problems and planning for the solutions can help everyone succeed. One way to predict problems and design solutions ahead of time is to have a brainstorming session in which everyone contributes a "What if?" question. For example:

- What if Gerard refuses to go into the store?
- What if Barbara is afraid of the water at the pool?
- What if Kirk gets upset and tries to bite a stranger?
- What if Sonja is great at "paying" the teacher in the school store but doesn't want to give her money to the real sales clerk?
- What if Rachel starts to scream when she sees the birds in the pet store?
- What if Andre runs away?

For each question, generate at least two solutions so that if one doesn't work, perhaps the next one will. Try to anticipate problems based on the individual's known likes and dislikes. For example, if Tony bites people when he is in a crowd, anticipate that biting may occur if you take Tony to a family reunion picnic.

Have Fun

Keep it fun! If Sylvia is learning how to cook four recipes at the group home and she has mastered spaghetti and meatballs, have her visit her mom and cook spaghetti and meatballs at her mom's place. (Don't forget to send home the same cards, props, and recipes that Sylvia uses at the group home.) The natural praise that Sylvia will get from her mom will keep her beaming for days!

Monitor and Evaluate to Teach Generalization

For generalization of skills to occur, teachers and parents should constantly be evaluating progress. Only if each student's progress is closely monitored can the teacher or parent plan for the next skill and consistently raise expectations and standards. Although it is important to provide opportunities for practice, there is a point at which you should either revise your teaching plan or move on and teach something new. Especially when students have already mastered a skill, it is distressing to see them doing the same mundane task day after day. Not only will they get bored and frustrated, but you are also likely to see behavior problems.

Teaching and evaluation should be closely linked. Ongoing evaluation can provide the information needed to plan the next step. Make sure that as you teach, you review the data you have collected. Compare the data to your target goal and either continue to teach (perhaps using some new strategies); revise your goal; or, if the goal is mastered, articulate your next objective. Raising performance expectations can involve decreasing the level of prompting and cues, increasing the level of independent action required, or teaching the student to generalize the skill to new situations or individuals. The only way to know which direction to go is to evaluate your data.

To promote generalization, remember to:

- Plan ahead
- Make site visits
- Use the same teacher or trainer when you first switch environments
- Teach in the natural setting
- Use the real thing (equipment, supplies, etc.)
- Have the proper materials
- Brainstorm and troubleshoot
- Keep it fun
- Evaluate and reassess progress

CHAPTER 17

HELP FOR THE "WHAT IFS"

But Wait a Minute! What if ...?

Regardless of how well-informed, well-trained, and well-prepared you are, expect to have problems and setbacks. Remember that you are working with students who are challenging. They can be exhausting and difficult to teach or parent, so give yourself credit for hanging in there! Obviously, as human beings we would all like our jobs to go smoothly. Whether we are parents, teachers, or both, it is certainly a lot easier and enjoyable to stick with something when it is going well. When our students demonstrate consistent patterns of learning and make great progress or when our children behave well and master new skills easily, we can relax and take pride in them and in ourselves. However, the reality is that sometimes teaching or parenting can be difficult and may not go as well, and we may end up feeling demoralized, frustrated, or depressed. But remember that even though progress may be slow, the most effective intervention available for students with disabilities is still a good education.

Much to the dismay of those of us (parents and teachers alike) who long for a consistent pattern of accomplishment, many students with disabilities take a nonlinear path to knowledge. They learn in spurts, often demonstrating a skill one day but not the next. They may do something exciting at home but refuse to do it at school the next day. They sometimes throw tantrums in public, even after you teach, practice, reteach, practice, and review what is expected behavior. They might surprise you with wonderful new language at school, but won't talk for Grandma and Grandpa. Try to remain positive but ready for anything. If you periodically review the data you have collected, you can stay focused on the big picture and not be discouraged by day-to-day fluctuations. It is best to appreciate the good times while they are here and remember that the bad times will not last forever.

There are some recurring and predictable situations that can be anticipated with these challenging students; they will be presented here in the form of possible questions and suggested responses. We hope that this last chapter will be useful during those discouraging times when things do not go as planned and you are ready to pull your hair out in frustration.

How do I know if the student **can't** do something or simply **won't** do it?

This question does not have an easy answer, but there are at least a few ways to discriminate a can't from a won't. Chapter 7 addressed the issue of what to teach. In addition, we suggest these three considerations, presented in order of least to most difficult to determine:

- Have you **ever** seen the student perform the skill or demonstrate the behavior? If so, under what conditions? (Where? When? With whom? With how much assistance? To get what?) If you have seen the behavior one or more times, then you know that the student has the physical and cognitive ability necessary to perform the skill again. If the student has done it once, he or she can do it again.
- Does the student have the necessary prerequisite skills? It may not be possible to identify every single prerequisite skill, but many are obvious. For example:

If Chantelle cannot discriminate the cafeteria door from the bathroom door, she clearly is not ready to go alone to the cafeteria for lunch. However, if, when you are with Chantelle, she walks down the hall, opens the cafeteria door without prompting, and moves unassisted to the spot where the line begins, she can probably be taught to do these things alone.

To begin with, you may want to develop a systematic plan for reducing your prompts and verbal instructions with Chantelle. For example, you could replace your verbal instructions with a card that has each step represented by a visual symbol, or you could label the bathroom and cafeteria doors with symbols.

If Chantelle can correctly identify the cafeteria door with prompts and cues from you, she can probably be taught do it on her own if you use some multisensory communication strategies.

- Have you heard from someone else that the student can perform the skill? Some students are very skilled at discriminating among those people in their environments for whom they will respond and those for whom they will not. Often, a child will do something for Mom but not for Dad, or vice versa. Likewise, at school, a student may demonstrate a behavior for the teaching assistant but not for the teacher. The factors related to students' lack of consistency in behavior are varied; they may include the closeness of the student-adult relationship; the firmness of the individual adult's teaching style; the gender of the teacher; any past consequences imposed for behavior or misbehavior; the adult's level of commitment to teaching the behavior; the beliefs the adult holds about the student's abilities; and the personal interaction patterns that have developed over time. In general, though, if the student can do it for someone else, he or she can do it for you. Although it is impossible to know for sure whether a student can perform a particular skill until you have seen him or her do it, it is better to expect too much than too little.

How consistent do I **really** need to be?

It sounds easy to be consistent, but in real life it is very difficult to always say and do things the same way over time. Consistency can be very difficult, especially for people who, because of their inborn temperament, are not naturally consistent. However, your students will be less confused and will learn more quickly the more consistent you are in your teaching approach, especially in your positive responses to correct, appropriate behavior. Inconsistency will make teaching basic skills (e.g., toilet training) difficult, if not impossible. Less basic skills may not be impacted nearly as much by some changes or inconsistency, but in general the more consistent the teaching the quicker the learning. Some ideas for enhancing your consistency:

- Teachers and parents who are not naturally organized and consistent should use some of the same strategies as their students do. Schedules, cue cards, calendars, visual or auditory reminders, and sticky notes are all examples of organizational tools that encourage consistency. For example, hearing a timer that signals the beginning or end of a teaching session can help a busy parent who loses track of the time. Posting a schedule can keep teachers and assistants on track so they remember who does what when. Following a script will make instruction in a skill more effective for a teacher who is less experienced or is nervous.

- If you are having trouble being consistent, limit the number of skills you are trying to teach at one time. Focus less on the number of skills and more on your consistency.

What if my student refuses to participate? Worse yet, what if he or she refuses to move or to come to the work area? How much physical intervention is appropriate?

There is no one right way to deal with a student who is refusing to cooperate. There can be many purposes for this behavior; you may want to review the ABC ➢ P model in Chapter 4. Briefly, here are some considerations:

- Some students have developed an automatic habit of refusing and saying "no," and they do so regardless of the request. They respond negatively to almost every request, often before parents or teachers have time to finish stating the question or direction. With these students, it is sometimes best to calmly keep on working, ignoring their protests and continuing the teaching sequence. Often, they will find themselves getting interested and doing well, almost despite themselves. For these students, using the "broken record" technique works. Just keep restating what you expect or want the student to do. At the same time, be careful to avoid a power struggle (See Chapter 6).
- Other students know that if they resist long and loudly enough, you will give in and lower your expectations. When you have a student who has continually had his or her own way because he or she tantrums, cries, refuses, or runs away, you have a hard job ahead of you. You need to decide whether you are willing and able to make the firm commitment necessary to stick out a difficult or time-consuming teaching situation. If your student needs to learn a skill that parents or teachers value greatly, it may be well worth the effort. For example:

At age four, Matthias has only a ten-word vocabulary. His parents are very anxious and want him to expand his verbal skills. Everyone knows *that Matthias can say "drink" because he does it all the time with the babysitter, who will give him a drink of juice or soda pop only when he says the word. However, when Matt's parents are at home, Matt stubbornly refuses to say "drink" or much of anything else. His dad gets nervous that Matt will die of dehydration, so he gives Matt drinks whenever Matt holds out his cup and grunts.*

In this situation, it is clear that Matthias not only has the skill to say the word "drink" but that he also knows the word's meaning and uses it consistently and purposefully to get what he wants. His parents can probably teach him to say "drink" for them as well as for the babysitter. However, they will have to make a commitment to establish a new contingency for Matt. For example, they could make getting a drink of his favorite soda pop contingent on his saying the word "drink" and could insist that Matt say "drink" every time he wants his soda pop. Otherwise, Matthias gets only water. If Matthias says "drink," his parents will immediately reinforce him with not only a drink of soda pop but also with lots of verbal praise, applause, and smiles for "Good talking." With this approach, Matt will probably learn to say "drink" very quickly. If Matt's parents can stay as consistent as the babysitter, Matt will likely be happy to chirp the word "drink" to please his parents. This approach is certainly more humane and more effective than if Matt's parents were to make him sit in a chair until he said the word.

Keep in mind that all people are different, and some students might hold out against your efforts almost indefinitely. With these students, it is important that parents and teachers be very careful about what they withhold. Things like food, drink, sleep, clothing, etc. that satisfy basic human needs are best left out of the contingency. It is absolutely never ethical, humane, or appropriate to refuse to meet a child's basic needs. You should not withhold something if the result could be injury, serious discomfort, or psychological damage. The suggested course of action to Matthias's parents (in the previous example) would be this:

Matthias's parents should give him soda pop only after he says "drink." However, they would continue to give him a less preferred drink such as water if he grunts or gestures. This way, there is no danger of dehydration, nor would Matt's parents be depriving him of needed nutrients. Eventually though, they should require Matt to give the verbal request for all types of drinks.

- To increase motivation and decrease noncompliance, try to keep learning fun and interesting. For example, Matthias's parents could model saying "drink" and role play receiving a drink in Matt's presence. They could make a game out of saying the word "drink" and could encourage Matt with smiles, play, and praise. In addition to these ideas, make sure that you have selected a very powerful reinforcer, perhaps one that the student has access to only when he or she demonstrates the skill you are teaching. In Matt's case, his parents know that his love for soda pop is so strong he would do almost anything to get some.

- If a student refuses to move to the teaching area, you can use mild physical prompts to encourage him or her, especially if the student is young or small. Mild prompts can be effective in the short term with young students. However, parents and teachers are urged to use caution here. If the student likes physical touch or contact (e.g., leaning on someone), this approach may make the problem worse. Remember, too, that the goal is to teach the student to move with you, come to you, or walk to the work area independently. Make sure you are using all of your multisensory supports and communication tools so that you are sure the student knows what you expect.

Isn't "positive reinforcement" just a nice term for "bribery?" And will I have to use rewards forever?

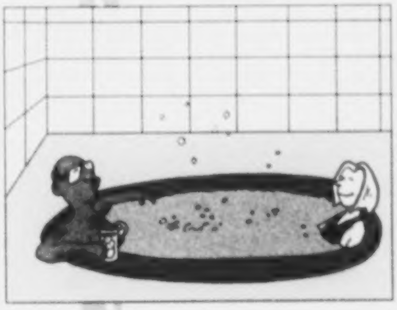
Positive reinforcement is used as a reward and a teaching tool; it helps students learn more quickly and efficiently by motivating them to keep trying. Positive reinforcement is especially useful with students who have significant cognitive, language, and/or motor disabilities. For students who are struggling to learn even the most basic skills that many others may take for granted, the use of positive reinforcement may ensure their mastery of those skills. It would be wonderful if everyone were intrinsically motivated to learn. Unfortunately, many students need something extrinsic to jump-start the learning process. Skills such as indicating "yes" or "no," making eye contact, following directions, and others are essential for students if they are to lead productive, happy lives in their families and communities. Positive reinforcement is also a pleasant and effective alternative to punishment.

Even though positive reinforcement is positive and effective, you will sometimes want to fade the reinforcers over time. Although adults all hope that no one ever fades our paychecks for the work we do, there are many situations in which teachers and parents can effectively reduce the quantity of the positive reinforcement they use. The goal is to fade to using mainly natural reinforcers such as praise and smiles. These are socially acceptable and are used universally. (They are also free!) For example, once Lin has dialed his telephone number accurately every day for a year, his mom could stop giving him a piece of gum each time he does it and instead pat him on the back, smile, and praise him.

In general, the more consistently social reinforcement is used in the environment (smiles, hugs, pats on the back, genuine compliments, high fives, thumbs up), the fewer tangible reinforcers will be necessary. However, there are exceptions to every rule and one day you may encounter a student who, when you try to fade a tangible reinforcer and use only praise and smiles, will immediately stop demonstrating the target behavior. For this student, you had better keep those baggies of pretzels and videos on hand.

What do I do when my student and I are both sick and tired of trying; when nothing seems to work and we are both discouraged, upset, impatient, and ready to cry?

This is an easy one: When you find yourself in this situation, stop and take a break. Rest, back off, open a cold can of soda pop (or whatever) and relax for a while. If you continue to try to work when either you or your student is past the endurance point, it is unlikely that the teaching session will be productive and you also run the risk of overreacting or of giving up entirely. Before you do either of these two things, take fifteen minutes off and come back later. If fifteen minutes is not enough, quit for the morning, afternoon, or day. There's always tomorrow! (And you can always have a hot bath, a quiet stroll, or whatever else takes your blues away!)



If you cannot get away, switch activities and do something fun that both you and the student enjoy, such as:

- Taking a walk in the park
- Playing with the pooch or other pet
- Playing a game
- Watching a video

Do something other than work for a while!

How do I know when to give up or back up? When should I stop trying to teach something that my student just does not seem to be able to learn?

Unlike the previous question, this one is not so easy. It is similar to the first question in this chapter ("How do I know if the student can't do something or simply won't do it?") and many of the same principles apply. First, check to see if your student can perform the skill and second, determine whether he or she has mastered the necessary prerequisite skills. If the answer to these two questions is "yes," then you may want to double-check yourself on the following before deciding to throw in the towel:

- Have you picked the "next logical skill" to teach? Is the skill related to a skill the student has already mastered?
- Have you provided all of the visual or other multisensory supports necessary? Is everyone consistently using these same supports in each environment?
- Have you double-checked the **What? Where? When?** and **How?** of your teaching sequence to be sure that the time of day, location of the teaching area, appropriateness of materials, etc. are all the way that you want them?
- Are you teaching the skill in a consistent manner, using the same words, phrases, or cues? Is everyone else who works with the student doing the same?
- Have you selected the most powerful reinforcer available? Has your student become tired or bored with the reinforcement?
- Does everyone in the student's environments have the same expectations for the student? Has everyone "bought in" and expressed a commitment to teaching this skill?
- Are you communicating effectively with everyone involved?
- Do you or does the student need a break or a change? Should you teach something else for a while and come back to this skill?
- Are you demonstrating genuine pleasure and excitement when you see approximations of the behavior?

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- Have you done a good job of keeping data on the student's progress? Have you reviewed the data to see if, in fact, there has been more progress than you think? Maybe things are moving along but it just appears to be slow.
- Review the teaching plan: Does it need to be modified somehow?

Remember that many students have had years of practice learning to do things the way they presently do them. Change will probably not occur quickly, even in the best of circumstances. It is better to err and try too long rather than give up teaching too soon. PATIENCE! PATIENCE! PATIENCE!

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

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Recommended Resources

These materials should help teachers and parents with the teaching process. Included are materials useful for creating visual communication strategies, ideas for independent tasks, and good teaching references.

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A compact device that enables the user to indicate two different ideas or responses (yes/no, hot/cold, open/close, etc.) by pressing one of two buttons. Each button activates a different sound and a different-colored light. Also includes 20 picture cards for labeling the buttons with different choices.

Life Skills Instruction for All Students With Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Integrating Real-Life Content Into the Curriculum

Mary E. Cronin and James R. Patton
Pro-Ed, Inc.
8700 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Austin TX 78757
(800) 897-3202
Provides teachers, students, curriculum specialists, and other personnel with information on how to develop life skills instruction programs and how to make those programs more meaningful to students.

Mayer-Johnson Picture Communication Symbols

Roxanna M. Johnson
Mayer-Johnson Company
PO Box 1579
Solana Beach CA 92075-7579
(800) 588-4548
A system of more than 3,000 reproducible and easily recognizable symbols focusing on commonly used words (e.g., *cat, bathroom, happy, shirt*) in six different categories. Also available separately: *Boardmaker Software* which allows the user to build, edit, and save customized communication boards using the same 3,000 symbols from the book; and *Boardmaker Addendum* disk which includes an additional 700 symbols.

Steps to Independence: Teaching Everyday Skills to Children With Special Needs (Third Edition)

Bruce L. Baker and Alan J. Brightman, with Jan B. Blacher, Louis J. Heifetz, Stephen P. Hinshaw, and Diane M. Murphy
Paul H. Brookes Publishing
PO Box 10624
Baltimore MD 21285
(800) 638-3775
Offers sample activities, case examples, skills inventories, and cartoon illustrations to help teach essential life skills to children with disabilities.

Symbol Book

Project P.A.C.E., Inc.
9725 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy., #230
Beaverton OR 97005
(503) 643-7015
Includes 220 color symbols, organized into six categories. Comes with a 3-ring binder, color-coded laminated pages of symbols, and reusable adhesive for use with the symbols.

Workjobs: Activity-Centered Learning for Early Childhood Education

Mary Baratta-Lorton
Addison-Wesley Alternative Publishing Group
1 Jacob Way
Reading, MA 01867
(800) 447-2226
Contains 104 math and language workjobs that explore primary concepts and help students develop critical thinking skills.

Workjobs II: Number Activities for Early Childhood

Mary Baratta-Lorton
Addison-Wesley Alternative Publishing Group
1 Jacob Way
Reading, MA 01867
(800) 447-2226
A set of activities to help young students explore the many facets of numbers and the various relationships that exist between them.

Workjobs for Parents: Activity-Centered Learning in the Home

Mary Baratta-Lorton
Addison-Wesley Alternative Publishing Group
1 Jacob Way
Reading, MA 01867
(800) 447-2226
A set of 43 multisensory activities for parents to use with their young children at home; the activities use manipulatives that can easily be made from household materials.

The following items are all available through:

PCI Educational Publishing
12029 Warfield
San Antonio TX 78216
(800) 594-4263

—Beginning Sign Language Books

Published by Garlic Press
A set of six activity books including word games to teach the finger alphabet; signs needed in the school setting; emergency signals and information; games; and animal illustrations. (PCI Catalog number GRL 201)

—Breakthroughs: How to Reach Students With Autism

Karen Sewell
A 250-page manual with techniques for teaching math, reading, fine motor, social, and self-help skills. Also available separately: 25-minute video. (PCI Catalog number ATT 801)

—Colorcards

Published by Winslow Press
A set of laminated cards with high-quality photos featuring common everyday situations and objects. Available in 5 subject areas; 96 cards per box. (PCI Catalog numbers WNS 304-309)

—Five Talker

Published by Attainment Company
Records up to five messages, each up to 24 seconds long, for use in remembering daily tasks, ordering food, greeting others, etc. Includes laminated inserts to cue the user to the meaning of each message. Also

available separately: carrying case and set of 576 reusable stickers. (PCI Catalog number ATT 125)

—Functional Curriculum: For Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Age Students With Special Needs

Paul Wehman and John Kregel
Presents practical curriculum-based objectives, instructional programs, and individual education plans focusing on daily living activities, social skills, transportation, work, and home living. (PCI Catalog number PRO 814)

—Picture File

Published by American Guidance Service
A set of 584 large picture cards with illustrations that show details more clearly than photographs do. Many cards contain high-interest information of the back to guide the teacher during discussion. (PCI Catalog number AGS 500)

—Sign Language Kit

Published by Garlic Press
Includes 300 Flash Cards with vocabulary words and associated hand signs; 26 Finger Alphabet Cards; and two books with lessons, illustrations, reviews, exercises, and assignments. (PCI Catalog number GRL 301)

—Survival Signs Curriculum

Janie Haugen
A system for teaching the meanings of 80 signs found on streets, at construction sites, by bus stops, etc. and signs for restrooms, wheelchair accessibility, general safety warnings, etc. Especially effective with individuals with limited or no reading skills. (PCI Catalog number PCI 709)

APPENDIX B:
REPRODUCIBLE FORMS

STOP Sign 179

"NO" Sign 181

Schedules 183-189

News Notes 191-199

Who's Where? Charts 201-205

Selecting a Target Behavior 207-209

ABC ➻ P Brainstorming 211-217

Reinforcer Checklist 219-221

Reinforcer Menus 223-225

See/Hear Charts 227-233

What Do I Do? 235

Self-Care Skills Checklist 237

Home Maintenance Skills Checklist 239

Play Skills Checklist 241

Lesson Planning Form 243-245

Weekly Planning Form 247

Environment Checklist 249

When to Teach 251

Reminder Card 253

You Got It! You Get It! 255

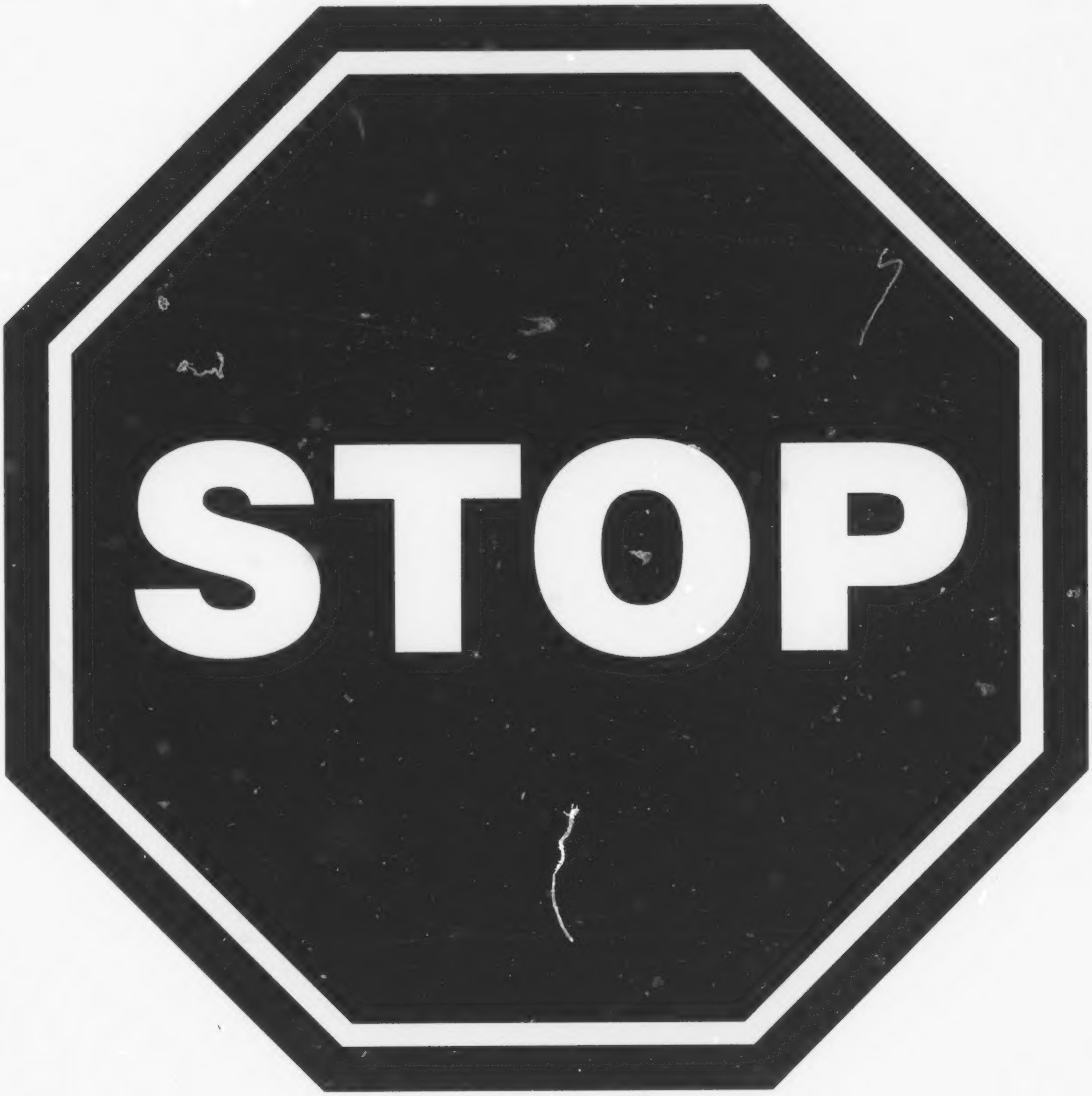
First/Then Forms 257-259

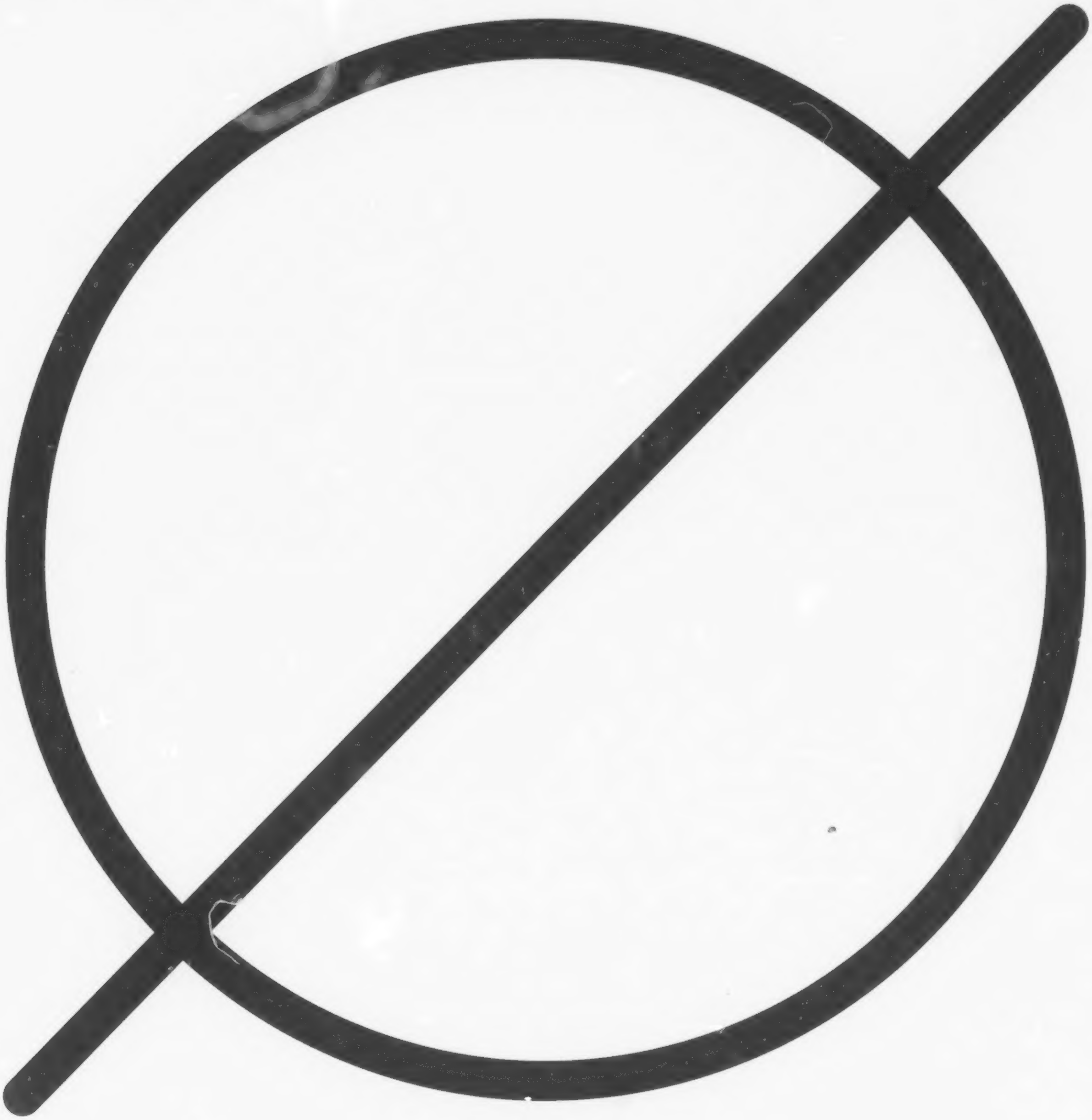
Task Progress Forms 261-263

Frequency Charts 265-275

Yes/No Recording Form 277

Field Experience Checklists 279-283


STOP



MY SCHEDULE

Today is ______________________

☐ 1.

☐ 2.

☐ 3.

☐ 4.

☐ 5.

☐ 6.

☐ 7.

☐ 8.

☐ 9.

☐ 10.

____________'S DAILY SCHEDULE

↓

↓

↓

↓

________________'S SCHEDULE

→

→

→

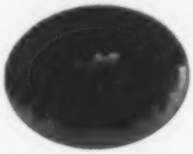
→

→

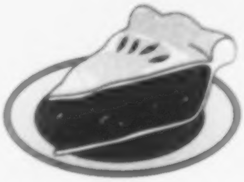
______________'s SCHEDULE

NEWS NOTE

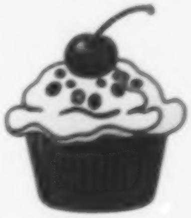
Today I ate:



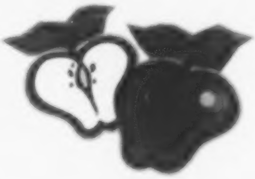
donut



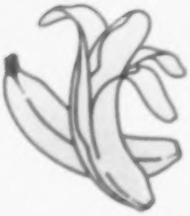
pie



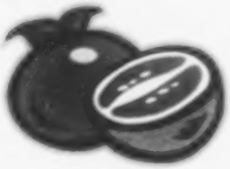
cake



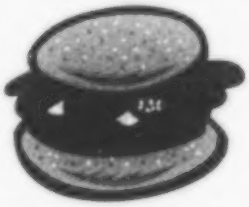
apple



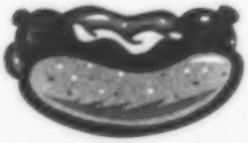
banana



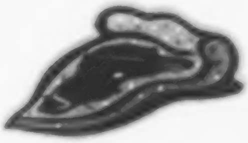
orange



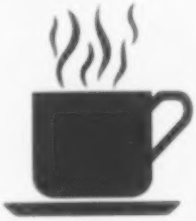
hamburger



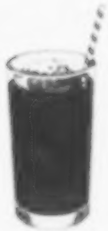
hot dog



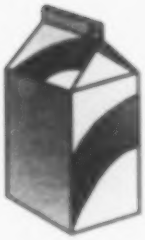
pizza



coffee



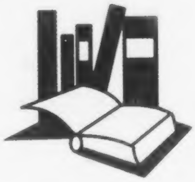
soda



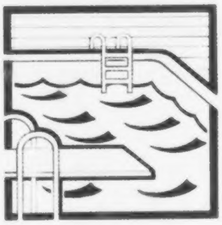
milk

NEWS NOTE

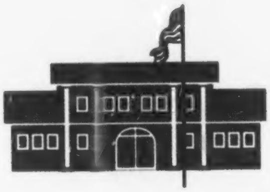
Today I went to:



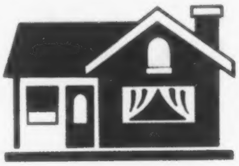
library



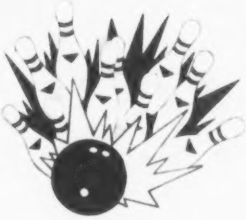
swimming pool



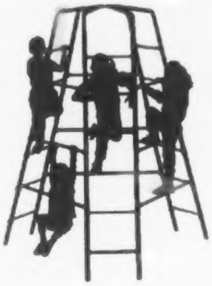
school



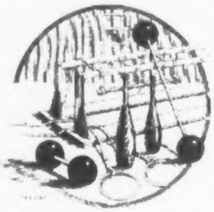
friend's house



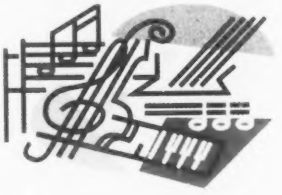
sporting event



playground



gym



music room

other____________

REVIEW COPY
NOT FOR SALE

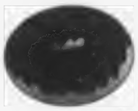
NEWS NOTE

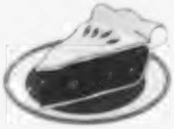
Last night, at home I:

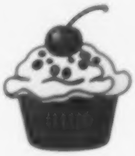
NEWS NOTE

Today I ate:

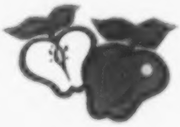
snack

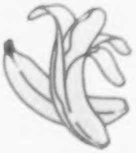


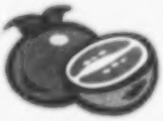




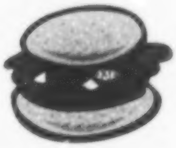
fruit

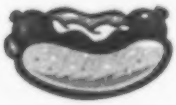


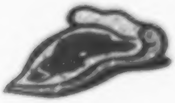




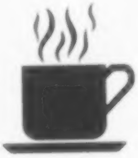
sandwich

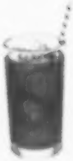


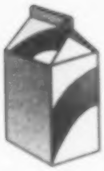




drink

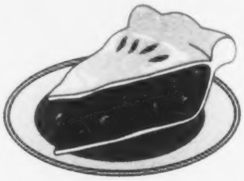


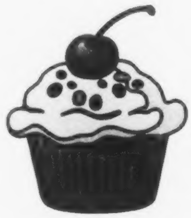


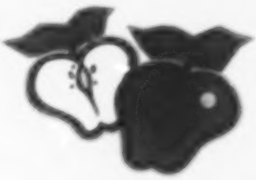


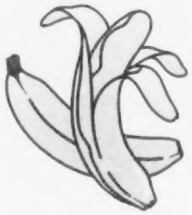
NEWS NOTE

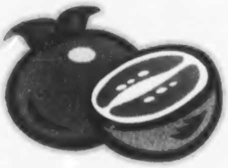
Today I ate:

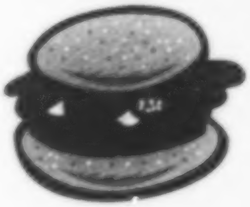


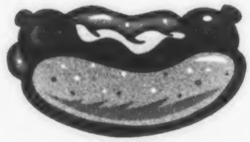


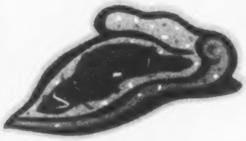


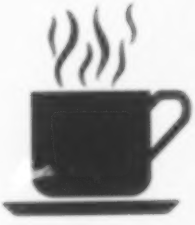


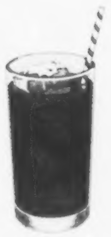


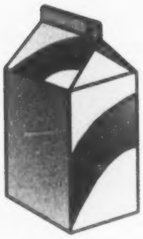












WHO'S WHERE? CHART

Day ________________________

Who	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3:00 PM	6:00 PM	9:00 PM

WHO'S WHERE? CHART

Who	Morning	Night

WHO'S WHERE? CHART

Who	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

SELECTING A TARGET BEHAVIOR

Student's Name ______________________ Date ________________

1. Identify 3-5 behaviors you would like to work on with the student:

   a. ______________________________

   b. ______________________________

   c. ______________________________

   d. ______________________________

   e. ______________________________

2. Now note the frequency with which these behaviors occur in a one-hour and in a 24-hour time block:

Harmful	Number of Environments		Number of Occurrences in 1 Hour	Number of Occurrences in 24 Hours	Precede or Follow?
		a. ____________			________
		b. ____________			________
		c. ____________			________
		d. ____________			________
		e. ____________			________

3. Place a star next to any behaviors (under item 2) that are harmful to the student or to others (i.e., any behaviors that can hurt someone).

4. In the boxes provided under item 2, note the number of environments in which each behavior occurs. Write the number in the box next to each behavior.

5. Now, examine your list of behaviors with the data you have collected. Try to assess if any of the listed behaviors precede or follow other behaviors. Write "precede" or "follow" to the right, under item 2.

6. Eliminate behaviors from this list until you are left with one behavior that you will target first to try to reduce.

(continued)

Now that you have selected just one behavior to target, see how it stacks up against this checklist:

☐ The behavior is truly disruptive or dangerous, not something that just annoys you.

☐ The behavior is not caused by medical reasons, medication side effects, or reasons beyond the student's biological control (consult the appropriate physician if you are unsure; biological reasons can often be the cause of disruptive behaviors).

☐ The behavior occurs with several different people or in several different environments, not solely in one environment or with only one or two individuals. (If the latter is the case, think about changing the environment or changing this person's way of interacting with the student.)

☐ The behavior is not a reaction to a past fear or trauma (e.g., the student screams at the sight of dogs because he or she was bitten by a dog once).

ABC ➣ P BRAINSTORMING

Student's Name ______________________ Behavior ____________________

Check off any antecedents and/or consequences that are occurring before or after the key behavior takes place:

Antecedent	Consequence	
☐	☐	It is meal or snack time
☐	☐	The student needs to use the bathroom
☐	☐	There is an increase in the noise level
☐	☐	There is a decrease in the noise level
☐	☐	People come running up to the student
☐	☐	People run away from the student
☐	☐	Others laugh or smile
☐	☐	Others become angry
☐	☐	Others scream
☐	☐	The student's clothes get changed
☐	☐	The student avoids a task
☐	☐	The student is rewarded or praised by friends or others
☐	☐	Animals are in the vicinity
☐	☐	It is morning
☐	☐	It is afternoon
☐	☐	It is evening
☐	☐	The student is hungry
☐	☐	The student is done eating
☐	☐	It is a certain day of the week
☐	☐	It is a certain period of the month or year
☐	☐	The student's allergies flare up
☐	☐	Corresponds to an event occurring at home/in school/in the community
☐	☐	Down time or student is bored
☐	☐	The student is in a crowd of people
☐	☐	Car/van rides

(continued)

Antecedent	Consequence	
☐	☐	It is raining/snowing
☐	☐	It is Friday night
☐	☐	It is Monday morning
☐	☐	The student forgot something (coat, lunch, glasses, wallet, hat, etc.)
☐	☐	Schedule changes, or schedule is unknown
☐	☐	The student is not allowed to do something
☐	☐	Too many demands or requests made of the student
☐	☐	The student is wearing certain clothes (slippery silk, itchy wool, vibrant red, ugly green, hates turtlenecks, wrong shoe size, no belt, skirt, dress shoes, etc.)
☐	☐	The student's hair was just cut/hair is too long
☐	☐	The student has just bathed/not bathed
☐	☐	The student has defecated/urinated on self
☐	☐	The student is not feeling well
☐	☐	The student has a headache
☐	☐	The student has a toothache
☐	☐	The student appears scared
☐	☐	The student appears happy
☐	☐	The student appears nervous
☐	☐	The student appears agitated
☐	☐	Rapid breathing is evident
☐	☐	The student appears aroused
☐	☐	Lighting is too dark/too bright
☐	☐	Someone is wearing strong perfume or has body odor
☐	☐	Someone is smoking
☐	☐	Someone is whistling
☐	☐	Someone is talking/not talking
☐	☐	Someone is blond/brunet
☐	☐	Someone is old/young
☐	☐	Someone is male/female

ABC ➻ P BRAINSTORMING

A
Antecedents (Precipitating Conditions)

- ☐ Unstructured time in ________
- ☐ When given the task ________
- ☐ When directed to ________
- ☐ When close to ________
- ☐ When provoked by ________
- ☐ When unable to ________
- ☐ When the environment includes ________
- ☐ Other (specify) ________

B
Specific Behavior(s)

____
____
____
____

____
____
____
____

____
____
____
____

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____
____
____

____
____
____
____

C
Consequences

- ☐ Teacher attention
- ☐ Teacher assistance
- ☐ Verbal warning or reprimand
- ☐ Cessation of the task
- ☐ Removal from the area
- ☐ Loss of privilege
- ☐ Time-out in class ________ ________
- ☐ Removal from class or school
- ☐ Other (specify) ________

P
Purpose of the Behavior

- ☐ Hiding a lack of understanding/ comprehension
- ☐ Escape or avoidance
- ☐ Gaining attention
- ☐ Gaining assistance
- ☐ Expressing anger
- ☐ Expressing frustration
- ☐ Seeking power or control
- ☐ Sensory stimulation
- ☐ Relief of fear or anxiety
- ☐ Other (specify) ________

ABC ➻ P BRAINSTORMING

Behavior You Are Tracking ____________________

This Behavior Is Defined As ____________________

	Date	Time	Location	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Who Was Present?	How Did Student React?
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								

REINFORCER CHECKLIST

Student's Name ____________________ Today's Date ____________

Rater's Name ______________________________

Check off all reinforcers that the student likes. Write in the specific brand or type of reinforcer. Next, circle the three reinforcers that are the student's all-time favorites.

Food	**Brand Name or Type**
Cereal	____________
Fruit	____________
Snacks	____________
Cookies	____________
Crackers	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

Objects	**Brand Name or Type**
Magazines	____________
Pictures	____________
Toys	____________
Manipulatives	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

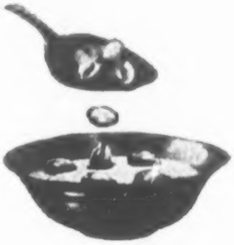
Social Contact	**Person's Name**
Talking	____________
Friends	____________
Staff	____________
Peers	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

(continued)

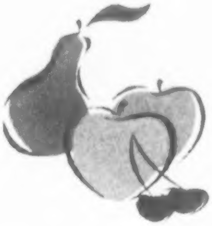
Activities	**Type**
Watching sports	
Dancing	
Working out	
Other exercise	
Games	
Movies	
Sewing	
Making something	
Drawing	
Writing	
Watering plants	
Caring for animals	

Other	**Brand Name or Type**
Audiocassettes	
Videos	
Noise makers	
Radio	

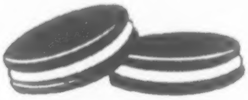
REINFORCER MENU FOR ____________________



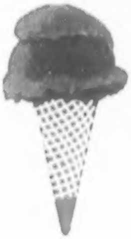
cereal



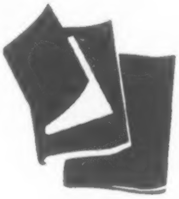
fruit



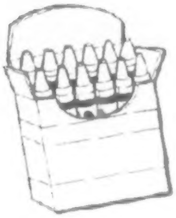
cookies



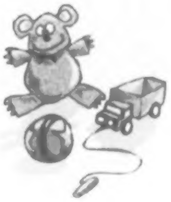
ice cream



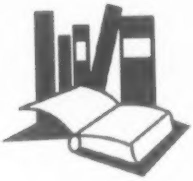
magazines



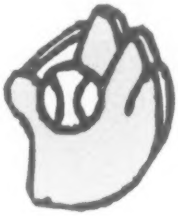
crayons



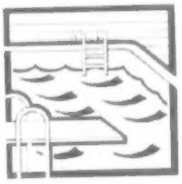
toys



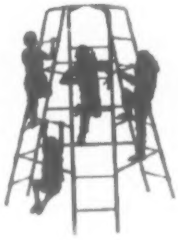
books



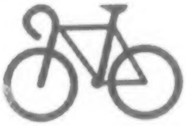
play baseball



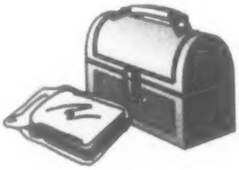
go swimming



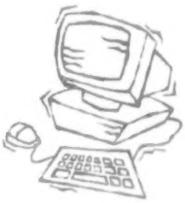
playground



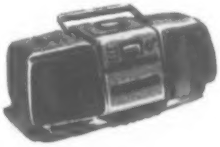
bicycle



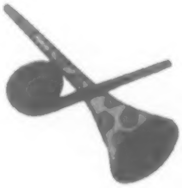
lunch with
teacher



computer
time



radio

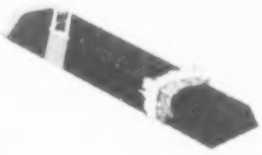


noise
maker

REINFORCER MENU FOR ____________________

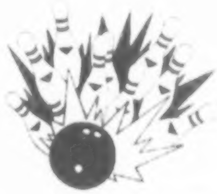
pizza

ice cream

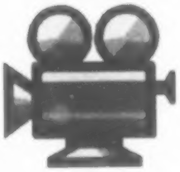


candy bar

cake



bowling

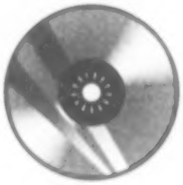


movies

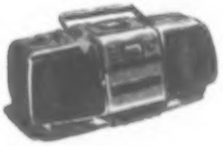
mall

friend's house

books



CDs



radio

TV

sewing

painting

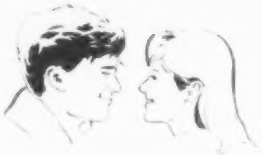
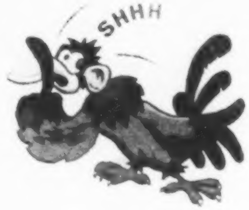
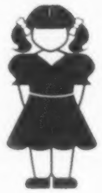
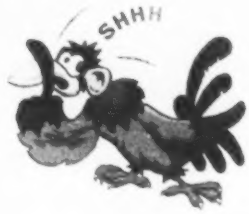
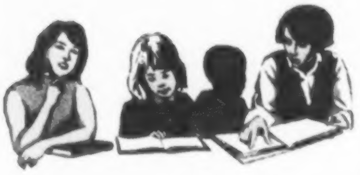
bicycling

dancing

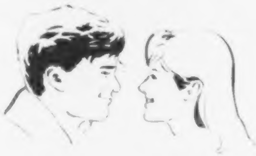
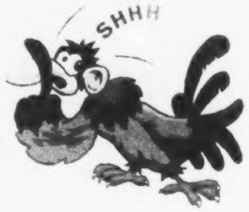
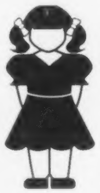
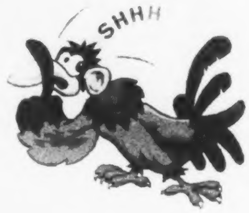
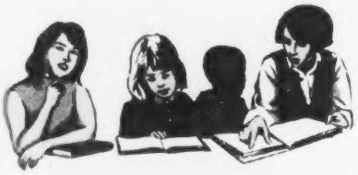
SEE/HEAR CHART

Skill	Looks Like	Sounds Like
1. Making eye contact	• Eyes on my eyes • Your head looking at me	• Quiet mouth
2. Following a simple direction	• Ears open • Eyes open	• No talking
3. Taking turns	• Waiting patiently • Watching others	• Quiet • "Is it my turn?" • "Would you like a turn?"

SEE/HEAR CHART

Skill	Looks Like	Sounds Like
1. Making eye contact		
2. Following a simple direction		
3. Taking turns		"Is it my turn?" "Would you like a turn?"

SEE/HEAR CHART

Skill	Looks Like	Sounds Like
1. Making eye contact	• Eyes on my eyes • Your head looking at me 	• Quiet mouth 
2. Following a simple direction	• Ears open • Eyes open 	• No talking 
3. Taking turns	• Waiting patiently • Watching others 	• Quiet • "Is it my turn?" • "Would you like a turn?"

SEE/HEAR CHART

What I See	What I Hear

WHAT DO I DO?

Break down the steps of the task the student is to learn, keeping it simple and specific.

Task Title: ______________________________

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________
10. ______________________________
11. ______________________________
12. ______________________________
13. ______________________________
14. ______________________________
15. ______________________________
16. ______________________________

SELF-CARE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill	Cannot do it at all	Needs much help to do it	Needs little help to do it	Can do it without help
Drink from a cup				
Eat with a spoon				
Eat with a fork				
Spread with a knife				
Cut with a knife				
Use a napkin				
Shower/bathe/dry off				
Wash/rinse hair				
Wash face				
Wash hands				
Brush teeth				
Comb hair				
Shave (if applicable)				
Use deodorant				
Trim fingernails/toenails				
Use toilet/toilet paper				
Use tampon/sanitary napkin (if applicable)				
Select clothes that match				
Select clothes appropriate to weather				
Select clothes appropriate to social occasion				
Put dirty clothes in hamper				
Put clean clothes away				
Put on/take off underwear				
Put on/take off an elastic-waist skirt/pants				
Put on/take off a pullover top				
Operate a zipper				
Button/unbutton clothes				
Tie shoes				
Put on/take off socks				
Thread a belt				
Buckle a belt				
Fasten snaps/hooks				
Care for minor cuts				
Treat a common headache				
Treat a common nosebleed				
Use a hankerchief/tissue				

HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill	Cannot do it at all	Needs much help to do it	Needs little help to do it	Can do it without help
Wash and dry dishes				
Empty trash baskets				
Sweep floor				
Mop floor				
Dust furniture				
Vacuum carpet				
Put away toys, books, clothes, etc.				
Use oven				
Identify canned or boxed foods by labels				
Use stovetop				
Get a simple snack (no cooking required)				
Make sandwich				
Fix salads/desserts				
Make cereal				
Cook a meal				
Cook a side dish or main dish				
Cook prepared foods				
Find/replace foods or utensils in kitchen				
Identify/discard spoiled food				
Select foods for a well-balanced diet				
Store leftover food				
Use toaster				
Use can opener				
Use coffee maker				
Use measuring utensils				
Replace burned-out light bulb				
Replace toilet paper roll in bathroom				
Adjust window curtains or shades				
Adjust television and radio, select stations, etc.				
Turn lights, television, etc. off when not in use				
Lock doors, windows at night and when going out				
Water houseplants				
Feed, water, and clean up after pets				
Make the bed				
Change sheets				

PLAY SKILLS CHECKLIST

Skill	Cannot do it at all	Needs much help to do it	Needs little help to do it	Can do it without help
Pay attention to someone speaking				
Pay attention to music				
Grasp/hold large toys or objects				
Grasp/hold crayons or pencils				
Push, pull, and turn toys				
Name toys and objects used for play				
Follow directions				
Imitate gestures				
Open/close lids or doors				
Name body parts				
Sit alone for up to five minutes				
Cut with scissors				
Paste paper/pictures				
Scribble with crayon or pencil				
Color in coloring book, mostly within lines				
Do simple noninterlocking puzzles				
Do interlocking puzzles				
Play computer games				
Match colors and shapes				
Throw and catch a ball				
Kick a ball				
Hit a ball with hand(s)				
Hit a ball with a bat				
Use paints				
Use modeling clay				
Play roles (pretend to be someone else)				
Dance				
Sing				
Do simple pantomimes				
Manipulate hand puppets				

LESSON PLANNING FORM

Student's Name ______________________ Date ________________

Skill ____

What? ____

Where? ____

When? ____

How?

- Stop ____
- Look ____
- Listen ____
- Watch me do it ______________________________________

(continued)

- Let me help you

- Now you show me

- You got it! You get it!

Reinforcers

☐ 1.
☐ 2.
☐ 3.
☐ 4.

Data Collection Form (select a data form from Appendix B)

☐ Attached ☐ Need to create

Materials needed to teach this skill:

☐ 1.
☐ 2.
☐ 3.
☐ 4.

WEEKLY PLANNING FORM

Student's Name ____________________ Week of ____________

Marking Period 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Class Period 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Long-Term Goal ______________________________

Objective	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Mastery Code: O = Ongoing, M = Mastered, NA = Not attempted

201

ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

To ensure you have created the best learning environment, check for the following:

☐ No food in area

☐ No television noise/radio noise/game noise

☐ No smoke or other strong smells

☐ No food odors

☐ Adequate lighting

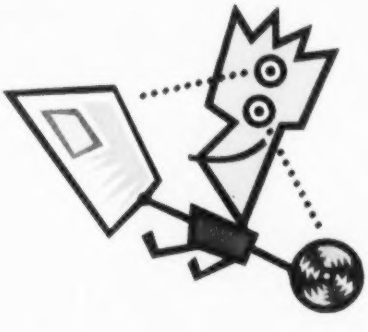
☐ No view of a window in direct sight of the student

☐ Table free of clutter or unrelated items

☐ No auditory distractions (clock ticking, faucet dripping, pet noises, baby crying)

☐ Room is without bright or distracting decorations

☐ Toys out of student's sight

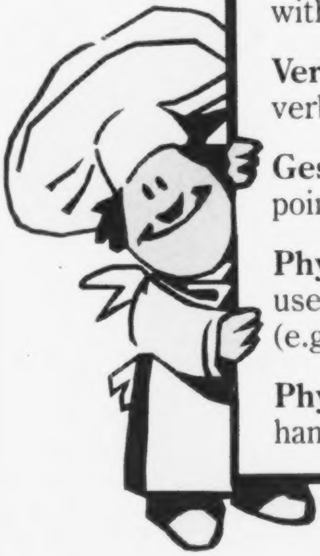


WHEN TO TEACH

To ensure that you are teaching at the best possible time, check for the following:

- ☐ You and the student are not absorbed in thought(s) unrelated to teaching
- ☐ You and the student are not tired, hungry, upset, or sick
- ☐ There are no immediate, pressing engagements
- ☐ You have set a time limit on how long you will teach
- ☐ You are teaching at a time of day that is good for you and the student (e.g., is either of you an early bird or night owl?)

REMINDER CARD



Prompting

After you have given a direction:

Less Intrusive ↑

Independent – Student does task by self without cues or assistance

Verbal Prompt – Student does task after you verbally prompt him or her to begin

OR

Gesture Cue – Student does task after you point or gesture (e.g., you point at an object)

Physical Cue – Student does task after you use a light touch to prompt him or her to begin (e.g., a touch on the elbow)

Physical Prompt – Student does task with hand-over-hand guidance

↓ More Intrusive

Remember when prompting to try to use the least intrusive prompt necessary and to allow ample wait time. When using physical prompts in the initial stages of teaching a new skill, fade the physical prompts and use less intrusive prompts as soon as possible.

YOU GOT IT!	YOU GET IT!

FIRST

THEN

207

REVIEW COPY
NOT FOR SALE

FIRST	**THEN**
FIRST	**THEN**

208

TASK PROGRESS FORM

Student's Name ______________________________

Task Title ______________________________

I = Performed the step independently
X = Needed a verbal prompt
O = Needed a physical prompt or cue

Date														
Task Steps														
1.														
2.														
3.														
4.														
5.														
6.														
7.														
8.														
9.														

TASK PROGRESS FORM

Student's Name ____________________ Month ________________

Task Title ____

Prompting Codes

☐ = No prompt needed (independent)
☐ = Gesture prompt
☐ = Verbal prompt
☐ = Physical cue
☐ = Physical prompt

Task Steps	Dates														
1.															
2.															
3.															
4.															
5.															
6.															
7.															
8.															
9.															
10.															
11.															
12.															
13.															
14.															
15.															
16.															

FREQUENCY CHART (HOURLY)

Student's Name ____________ Date ________

Behavior I Am Tracking ____________ Definition of This Behavior ____________

Circle or black out the number of times the behavior occurred.

FREQUENCY

+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
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7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7AM	8	9	10	11	12PM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

TIME

FREQUENCY CHART (DAILY)

Student's Name ____________________

Behavior I Am Tracking ____________________ Definition of This Behavior ____________________

Circle or black out the number of times the behavior occurred.

Date																		
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
FREQUENCY	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM

TIME

FREQUENCY CHART (MONTHLY)

Student's Name ______________________ Month ______________

Behavior I Am Tracking ______________________________

Definition of This Behavior ______________________________

Days

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
# of times occurring								
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
# of times occurring								
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
# of times occurring								
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
# of times occurring								
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	TOTAL
# of times occurring								

Total frequency for this month: ______________

Transfer monthly total to Yearly Frequency Chart to see progress.

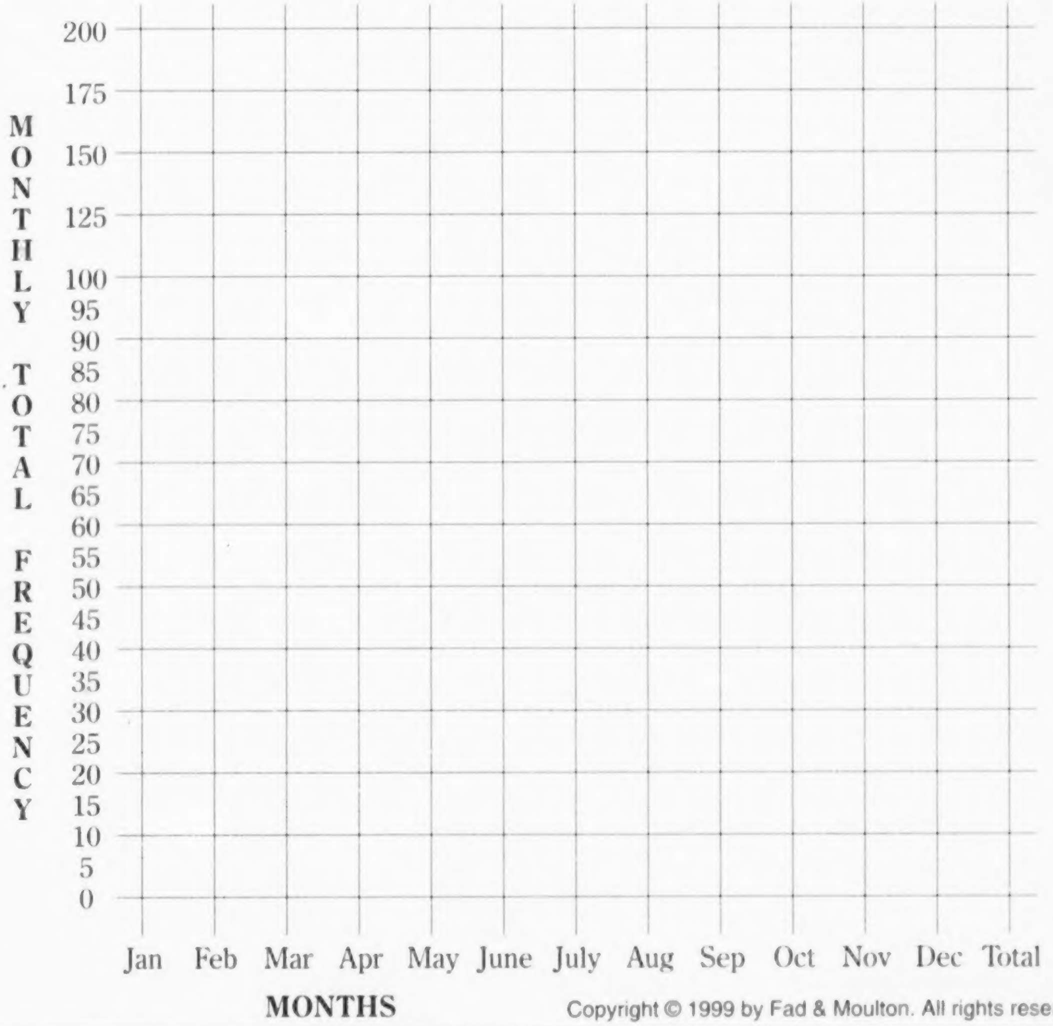
FREQUENCY CHART (YEARLY)

Student's Name ____________________ Year of ____________

Color/Symbol = Name of target behavior

KEY

☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________
☐ = ____________________



TARGET SKILL FREQUENCY CHART

Student's Name ______________________________

Target Skill ______________________________

Prompt Level ______________________________

Fill in the total number of times a student performs a task per trial.

Date	Trials										% Correct Per Day
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

TARGET SKILL FREQUENCY CHART

Student's Name ______________________________

For each target skill, circle each trial that the student completes with the prompt level sought, or with a less intensive prompt.

Target Skill	Daily Lesson Sets									
	1 Trials	2 Trials	3 Trials	4 Trials	5 Trials	6 Trials	7 Trials	8 Trials	9 Trials	10 Trials
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
______________	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prompt Level ______	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
______________	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prompt Level ______	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
______________	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prompt Level ______	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
______________	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prompt Level ______	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
______________	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prompt Level ______	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

YES/NO RECORDING FORM

Student's Name ______________________ Date ______________

Are you working?

Yes	No

FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

Using Public Transportation

Student's Name ____________________ Date ____________

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Dressed appropriately	☐	☐	☐
2. Walks on sidewalks when available	☐	☐	☐
3. Gives coupons to the bus driver	☐	☐	☐
4. Gives correct change for city bus	☐	☐	☐
5. Places change in receptacle	☐	☐	☐
6. Asks driver for transfer	☐	☐	☐
7. Rings bell to signal driver at appropriate bus stop	☐	☐	☐
8. Steps off bus and waits for bus to leave before crossing street	☐	☐	☐

GRADE ____________

COMMENTS ____

____

____

____

____

____

Adapted with permission from Cronin, M.E. & Patton, J.R. (1993). *Life skills instruction for all students with special needs: A practical guide for integrating real-life content into the curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

Comparison Shopping

Student's Name ________________ Date ____________

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Appropriate dress: Collared shirt; jeans in good condition	☐	☐	☐
2. Clean-shaven	☐	☐	☐
3. Well-groomed hair, nails, and ears	☐	☐	☐
4. Smells nice	☐	☐	☐
5. Makes polite conversation	☐	☐	☐
6. Refrains from name-calling	☐	☐	☐
7. Talks in a soft voice	☐	☐	☐
8. Does comparison shopping in an orderly manner	☐	☐	☐
9. Handles equipment (televisions, stereos, VCRs) with care	☐	☐	☐
10. Orders food in a clear voice at lunch	☐	☐	☐
11. Says "thank you" after ordering	☐	☐	☐
12. Uses appropriate table manners	☐	☐	☐
13. Waits for everyone to finish eating before getting up to leave	☐	☐	☐
14. Cleans up table after eating	☐	☐	☐
15. Returns to bus at right time	☐	☐	☐

GRADE ____________

COMMENTS ____

____

____

Adapted with permission from Cronin, M.E. & Patton, J.R. (1993). *Life skills instruction for all students with special needs: A practical guide for integrating real-life content into the curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

FIELD EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

Registering to Vote

Student's Name ____________________ Date ____________

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Dresses appropriately	☐	☐	☐
2. Brings appropriate personal information	☐	☐	☐
3. Walks on sidewalks when available	☐	☐	☐
4. Has correct change for the bus	☐	☐	☐
5. Presents bus card to driver and places money in change receptacle	☐	☐	☐
6. Politely asks for voter registration forms to fill out	☐	☐	☐
7. Completes form with little or no assistance	☐	☐	☐
8. Selects and orders items from menu at lunch	☐	☐	☐
9. Uses appropriate table manners	☐	☐	☐
10. Leaves appropriate tip for the server	☐	☐	☐
11. Rings bell to signal driver at appropriate bus stop	☐	☐	☐
12. Steps off bus and waits for bus to leave before crossing street	☐	☐	☐

GRADE ____________

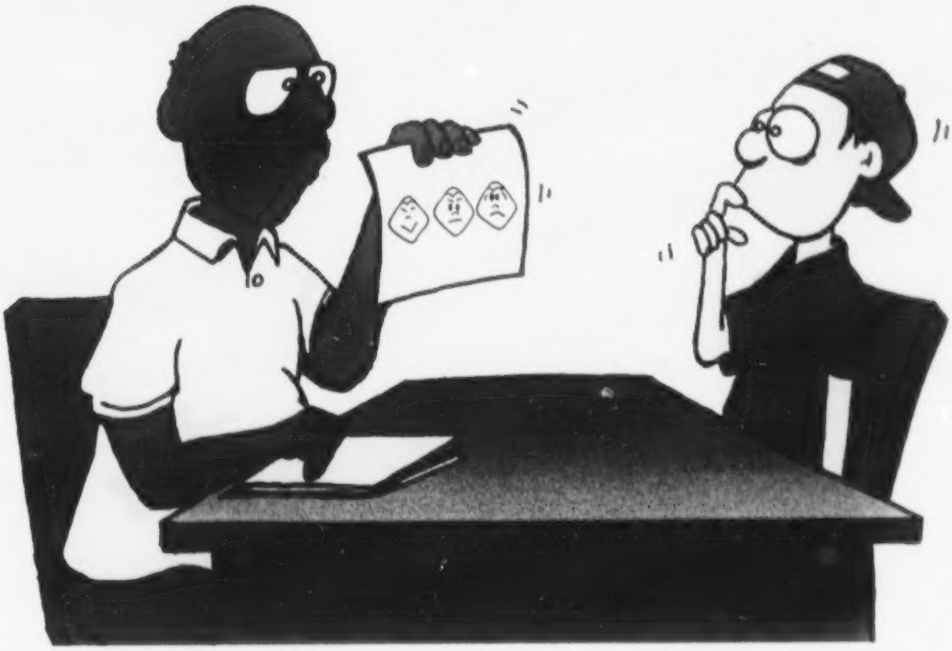
COMMENTS ____

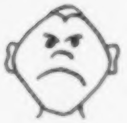
Adapted with permission from Cronin, M.E. & Patton, J.R. (1993). *Life skills instruction for all students with special needs: A practical guide for integrating real-life content into the curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

REVIEW COPY

APPENDIX C: PICTURE SYMBOLS

If you wish, you may reproduce these pictures for use in creating your own Picture/Symbol Cards.





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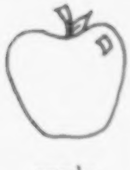
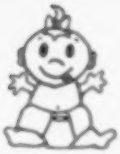


apple



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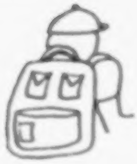

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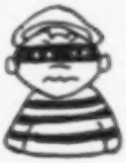

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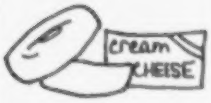
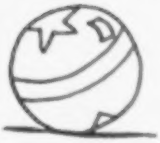

cream
CHEISE

bagel



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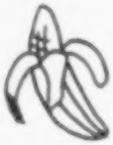

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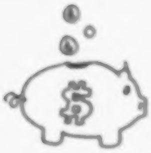

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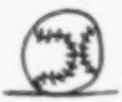

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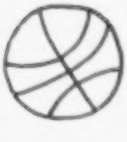

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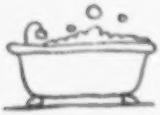
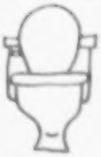


bath



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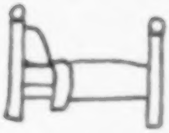

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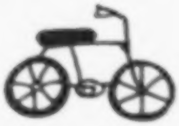

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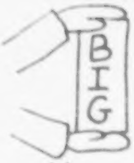

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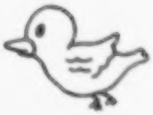

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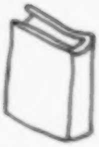

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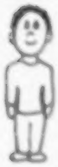
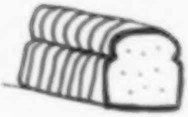
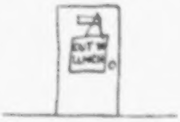


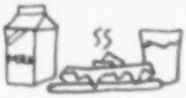
boy



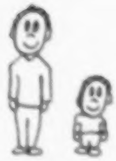
bread


OUT TO LUNCH

break



breakfast



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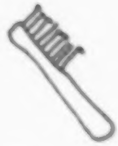
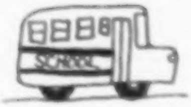
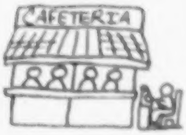


brush



bus



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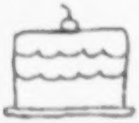

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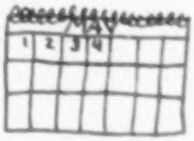

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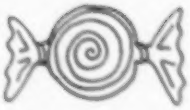

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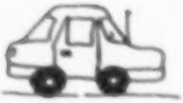

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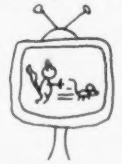
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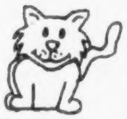
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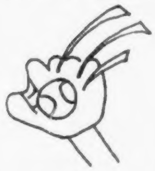
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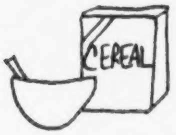
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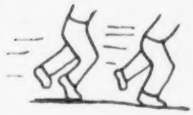
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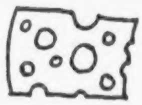
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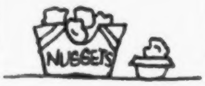
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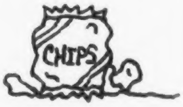
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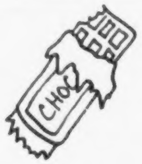
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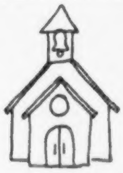
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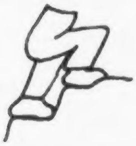
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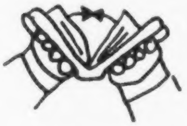
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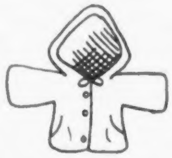
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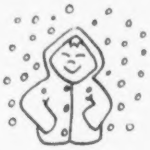
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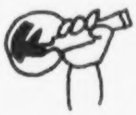
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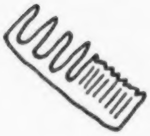
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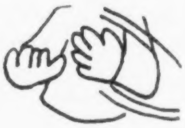
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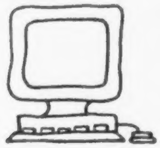
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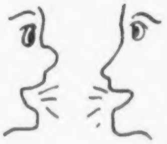
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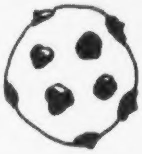
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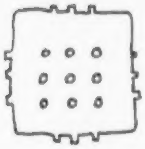
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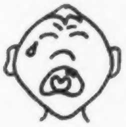
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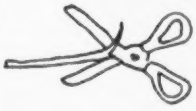
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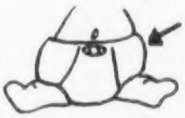
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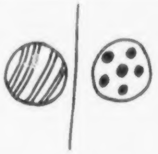
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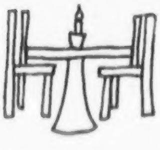
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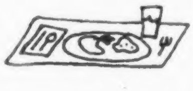
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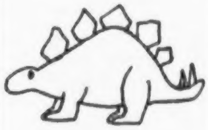
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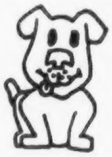
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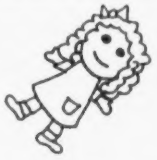
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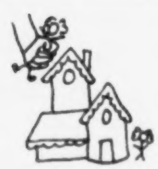
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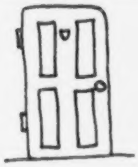
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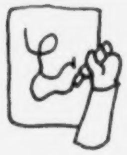
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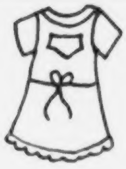
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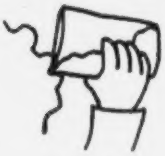
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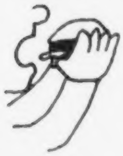
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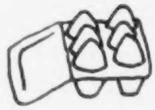
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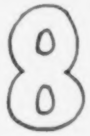
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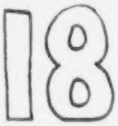
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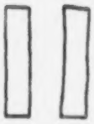
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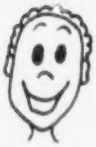
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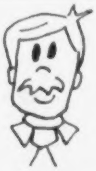
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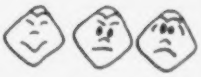
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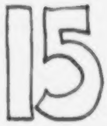
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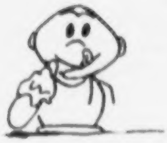
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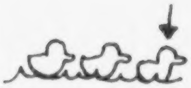
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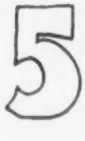
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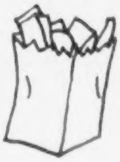
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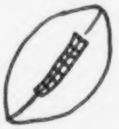
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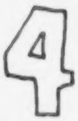
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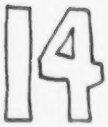
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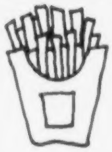
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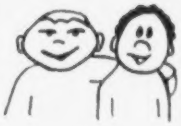
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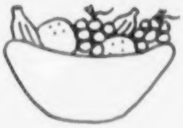
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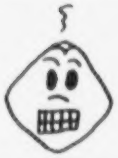
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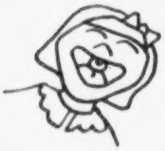
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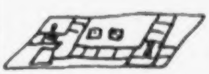
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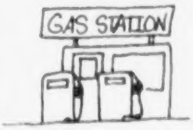

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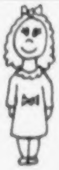
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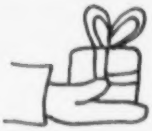
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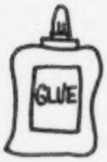
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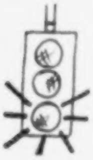
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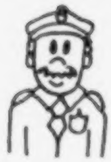
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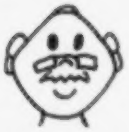
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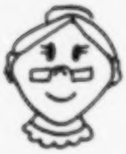
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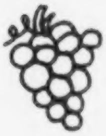
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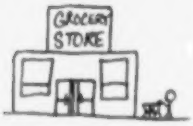
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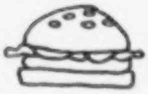
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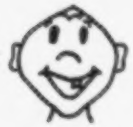
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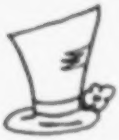
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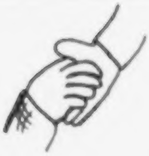
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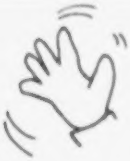
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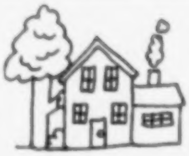
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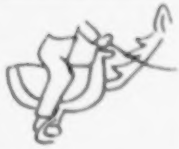
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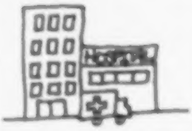

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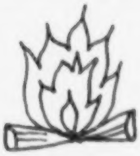
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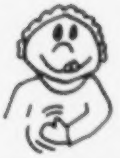
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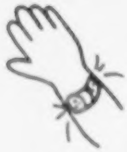
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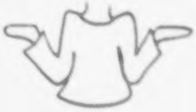
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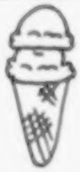
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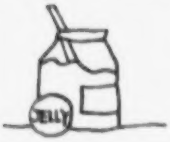

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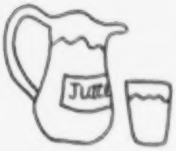

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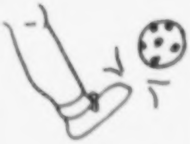
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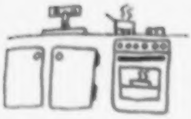
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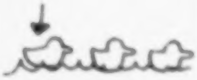
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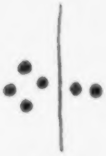
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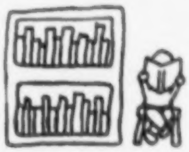
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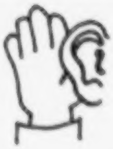
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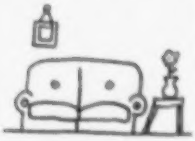
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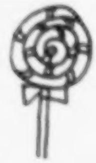
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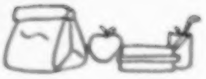
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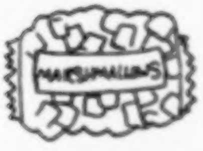
MARSHMALLOWS
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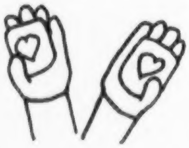
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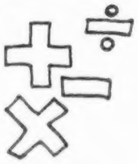
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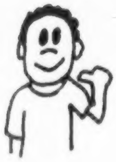
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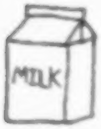

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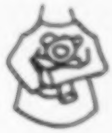
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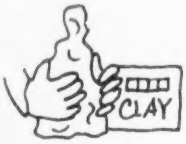

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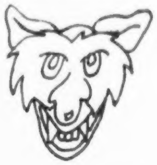
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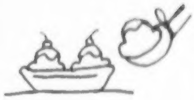
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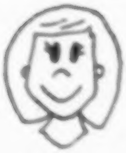
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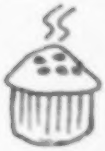
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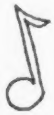
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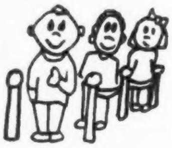
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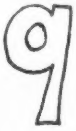
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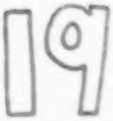
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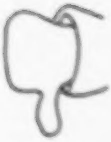
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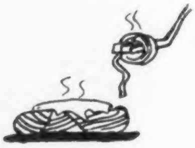
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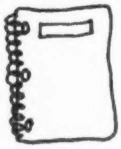
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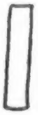
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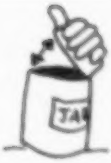

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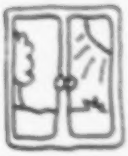
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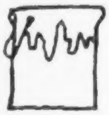
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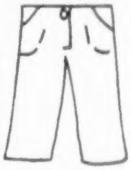
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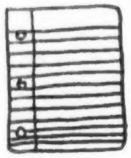
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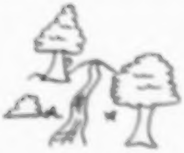
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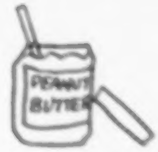
PEANUT BUTTER
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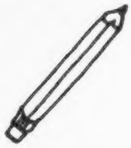
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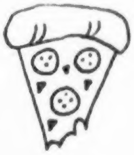
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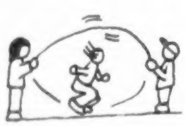
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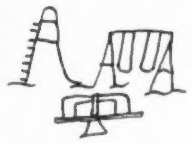
REVIEW COPY
NOT FOR SALE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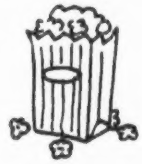
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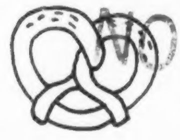
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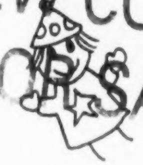
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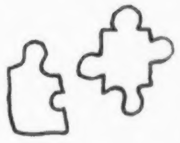
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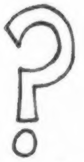
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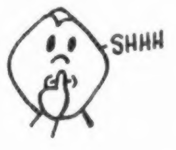

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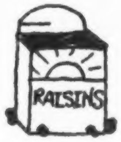

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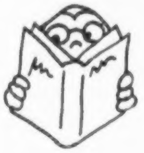
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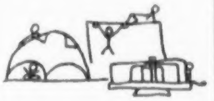
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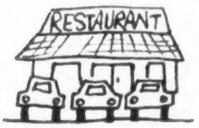
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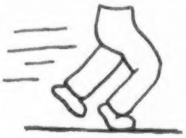
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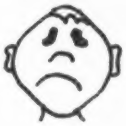
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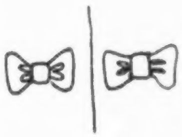
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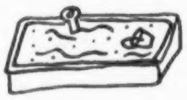
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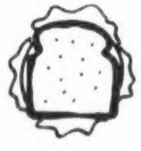
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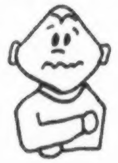
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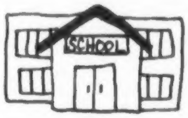

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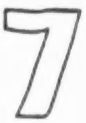

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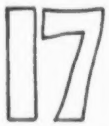

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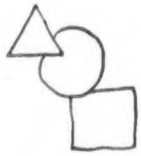
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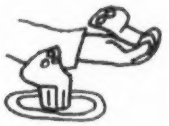
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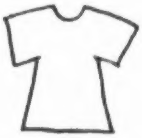
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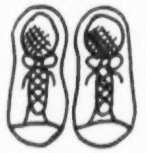
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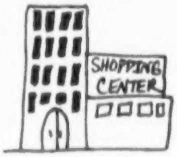
SHOPPING
CENTER
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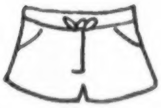
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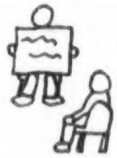
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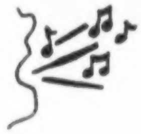
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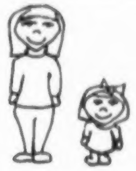
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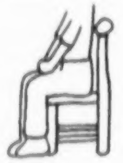
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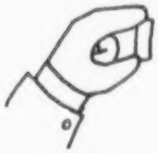
six

sixteen

skirt



small

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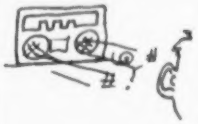
socks

soda pop



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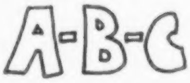

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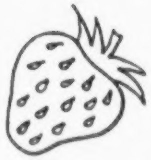
stop

store



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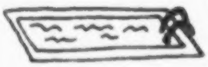
surprise

swim



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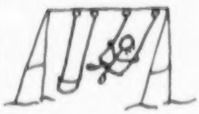

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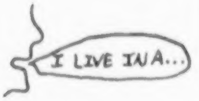


talk

tape

taste

teacher

television

tell me about . . .

ten

thirteen

three

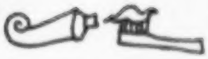
throw

tickle

time

toast

toothbrush



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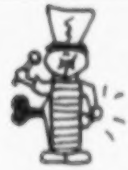

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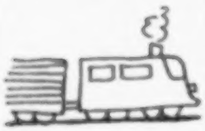

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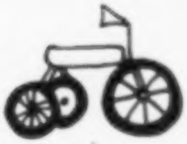

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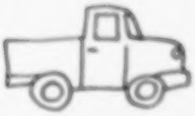

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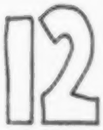

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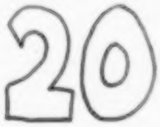

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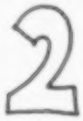

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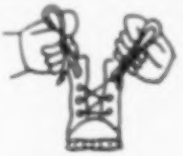
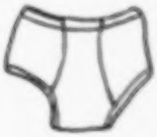
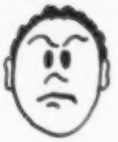


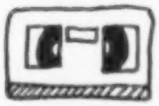
tying shoes



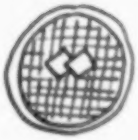
underwear



upset



videotape



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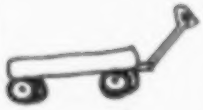
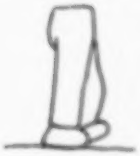
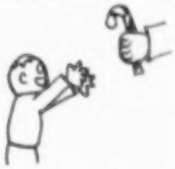


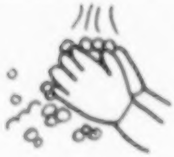
wagon



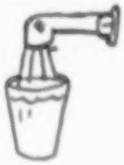
walk



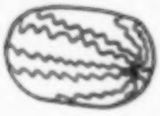
want



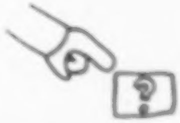
wash



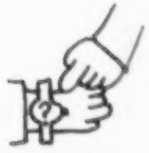
water



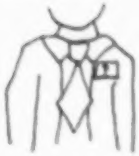
watermelon



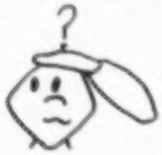
what is this?



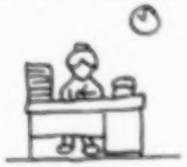
what time is it?



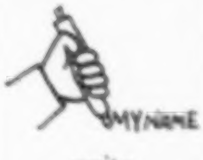
what's your name?



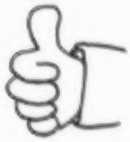
where is . . .



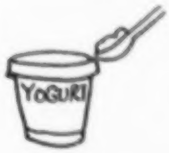
work



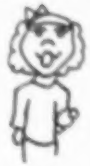
write



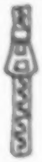
yes



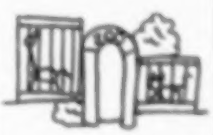
yogurt



you



zipper



zoo

231

MATERIALS KIT

The Materials Kit is available separately and contains signs, folders, and other extras to help you implement this book's strategies more quickly and easily. Although it is not necessary that you purchase these related materials, they are available for your convenience and will greatly enhance the effectiveness of the program. The kit includes the following items, all packaged in a convenient custom-made case:

- "Stop" sign
- "No" sign
- Noise maker
- Picture/Symbol Cards
- Reusable adhesive circles (for attaching the Picture/Symbol Cards to the folders and signs)
- Reinforcer Menus (2)
- 12 folders, as follows:
    - I Feel _______.
    - I Want _______.
    - I Like _______.
    - I See _______.
    - I Need _______.
    - Can You Help Me With _______?
    - Is This _______?
    - Give Me _______.
    - Now It's Time To _______.
    - Today I _______.
    - Do You Want To _______?
    - Do You Need _______?
- News Notes (5)
- "Sit" sign
- Clicker
- Reminder Card
- Stopwatch
- Timer
- "Go" sign
- Whistle
- "Taking Turns" sign
- On-Task Beeper Tape
- "Yes" and "No" word signs
- "Yes" and "No" picture signs (thumbs-up/thumbs-down)
- Color signs (solid green/solid red)
- Schedules (2)
- First/Then Forms (2)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST FROM SOPRIS WEST

Better IEPs

How to Develop Legally Correct and Educationally Useful Programs

Barbara D. Bateman, Ph.D., J.D. and Mary Anne Linden, J.D.
Grades PreK-12

Utilize a simple, yet powerful, three-step process to create legally correct IEPs that really meet individual student needs. Simple, straightforward explanations of the law, including the new IDEA mandates, and analyses of real-life IEPs offer solutions to common flaws in IEP process and content. With this newly revised, updated edition, you'll be able to:

- Meet all IDEA '97 requirements
- Refocus IEPs on student needs
- Incorporate behavior intervention plans
- Involve families in the IEP process in a positive and productive way
- Write measurable goals and objectives based on present level of performance

Better IEPs offers the broad perspective of a professional educator who has both hands-on teaching experience and a solid background in special education law. This book is an essential reference for school administrators, advocates, special educators, and parents of children receiving special education services.

IEP Tracker

The Software Solution for Tracking Student Progress

Shelvie Cole, M.S., M.S.E.; Maureen Bradshaw, M.S.E.; and Larry Cole, Ph.D.
Grades K-12

Track individual student progress throughout the IEP process—by period, day, week, or month—accurately and easily. Designed specifically for education professionals who work with students with disabilities, this flexible software simplifies monitoring documentation and transforms data into visual graphs that make progress easy to see and evaluate. Quickly determine the progress of an unlimited number of individual students, with as many as 10 goals and 30 objectives each, by sum or percentage of goals achieved. View and print student progress reports for parents or use as summaries for school year review. Includes: one 24-page *User Manual* and two Windows® 95/3.1-compatible 3.5 floppy disks. Can also be used with Macintosh® Superdrive and emulation software such as *Soft PC*. Technical support is available.

Different Is Not Bad, Different Is The World

A Book About Disabilities

Sally L. Smith, M.A.; Illustrated by Ben Booz
Grades 2-6

This children's book and audiotape teaches students about their own and others' disabilities and innate worth as well as how to understand and empathize. They are also introduced to historical figures with disabilities who succeeded. 30 pages.

Get 'Em on Task

A Computer Signaling Program to Teach Attending and Self-Management Skills

R. Brad Althouse; William Jenson, Ph.D.; Marilyn Likins, Ph.D.; and Dan Morgan, Ph.D.

You can use this auditory signaling system to support any positive reinforcement or self-management programs. Step-by-step instructions make it easy to set program length, number of signals, random or regular/specific intervals, and even "bonus" signals. 3.5 PC disk. Minimum requirements: Windows® 3.1 or later, 386 PC or faster, 8 MB RAM, 4 MG hard disk space, sound card.

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